National Bulletin on Liturgy

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Liturgical Spirituality
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's life of worship and prayer.

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

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“Spirituality” is of great concern today, and a variety of individual schools of spirituality flourish. Basic to all of them, however, is the spirituality that is expressed and celebrated in the liturgy of the church. The basic elements of a liturgical spirituality are identified, and their implications for the daily as well as Sunday lives of Christians are drawn out.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who Is Our God?</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Do We Pray?</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Is Our Relationship With God?</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Do We Live Ministerial Lives?</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Do We Relate To Other Persons?</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Is Our Relationship To Creation?</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liturgy Commission Meetings: A Liturgical Approach</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences between the Eucharist and Liturgies of the Word plus Holy Communion</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulletins for 1991</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Review</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Spirituality” is a popular term these days, and it is used in a variety of ways. The definitions of Kevin Irwin, Marjorie Procter-Smith and Gabe Huck guide the discussion of liturgical spirituality presented in this issue of the Bulletin.

Kevin Irwin states that spirituality is “the experience of our relationship with God in faith and the ways in which we live out our faith.” He subsequently expands on the first part of this definition by adding, “Spirituality involves the composite of actions, prayer, ascetical practices, and deeds of witness in which Christians engage by way of responding to God in faith.”

Marjorie Procter-Smith presents a still broader view, explaining that “spirituality is a way of being in the world.” She goes on to state that it is a way of living, a way of knowing, and a way of seeing and hearing. Spirituality includes our relationship with God, with ourselves, with other persons, and with the whole world.

What, then, is a liturgical spirituality? Irwin defines it simply as “a spirituality that is derived from the liturgy.” Applying this to his definition, given above, the liturgy is to be the basis and inspiration for the way in which we experience our relationship with God in every aspect of our life, the model and pattern for all the actions, prayer, etc. through which we respond to God in the whole of our lives.

Way of being: Applying this understanding of liturgical spirituality to Procter-Smith’s definition of spirituality, we would conclude that the liturgy is to be the basis and inspiration for our whole “way of being in the world.” The liturgy shows us a way of living, of knowing, and of seeing and hearing. The liturgy provides the model and pattern of our relationship with God, with ourselves, with others, and with the whole world.

Gabe Huck speaks of liturgical spirituality from a somewhat different perspective than Irwin and Procter-Smith, but arrives at a similar conclusion. He writes:

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy still takes my breath away when it says so clearly that doing liturgy fully, consciously, actively is the first and indispensable source of the authentic Christian spirit. And that, that spirit, is what matters; that is what it means that what we do at liturgy is done for the life of the world.

To be imbued with the spirit of the liturgy: It means that the baptized person and the community of the baptized grows up with a liturgy that is

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2 Kevin Irwin, Liturgy, Prayer and Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press 1984), 13
3 Ibid., 14
4 Marjorie Procter-Smith, In Her Own Rite (Nashville: Abingdon 1990), 164
5 Irwin, 16
strong enough to shape the mind and heart and soul, all the public and household deeds, all the language.\textsuperscript{6}

In this issue of the Bulletin the understandings of liturgical spirituality considered above are combined and rephrased in terms of several specific questions:

- Who is our God?
- How do we pray?
- What is our relationship with God?
- How do we live ministerial lives?
- How do we relate to other persons?
- What is our relationship to creation?

Other questions could also be posed, including:

- How do we communicate with others?
- How do we grow?

These, however, will not be considered at this time.

Questions and answers: The liturgies of the Christian people provide answers to these questions, answers that can provide an all-encompassing framework for our lives as individuals and as church. The elements of liturgical spirituality are described verbally in the biblical passages proclaimed in the liturgy and in the liturgical texts. They are given nonverbally in the signs, symbols, rituals and structures of our liturgical celebrations.

Importance of the nonverbal: In this issue the Sunday eucharist and the rites of Christian initiation are used as primary sources of liturgical spirituality. Space does not permit extensive consideration of other liturgies. Scriptural texts are seldom referred to, and nonverbal dimensions of our liturgical celebrations have been given more weight than liturgical texts, simply because they often are neglected.

Little has been written: Liturgical spirituality has a relatively small literature, especially considering the enormous amount of writing on other aspects of spirituality. Individual contemporary writers on liturgical spirituality have so far taken rather distinct approaches to this subject. The variety of perspectives expressed by contemporary writers may be appreciated by consulting the reading list given below.

Liturgy as source and font: Though a large number of individual spiritualities (for example, Benedictine, Carmelite, Franciscan, Ignatian, native, creation-centered, feminist) have been named in contemporary spiritual writings, it is our contention that a liturgical spirituality must undergird each of them if they are to be healthy and authentically Christian. If liturgy is the source and font of the Christian life, as Vatican Council II states, then it must be source and font of all Christian spirituality as well.

\textsuperscript{6} Gabe Huck, "The Michael Mathis Award," Liturgy 90 (vol 26, no 6, August-September 1990) 13-15; emphasis added.
Towards a better relationship: This is not always appreciated or taken very seriously. Liturgy appears to be peripheral or secondary in some spiritualities, at least as interpreted by contemporary writers. Has liturgy failed to be relevant to certain spiritualities? Why might this be? Have spiritual writers failed to root themselves in the contemporary liturgy? In either case, a greater meeting of minds and spirits between liturgy and diverse spiritualities seems to be called for.

Selected Reading


Louis Bouyer, Liturgical Piety (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press 1955)

Gabriel M. Braso, Liturgy and Spirituality, 2nd ed. (Collegeville: Liturgical Press 1971)

Anthony M. Buono, Praying with the Church (Staten Island: Alba House 1990)


Kevin W. Irwin, Liturgy, Prayer and Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press 1984)


Marjorie Procter-Smith, *In Her Own Rite* (Nashville: Abingdon 1990)


J. R. Sheets, “Personal and liturgical prayer,” *Worship* 47 (August-September 1973) 405


Who Is Our God?

The actions and texts of our liturgical celebrations lead us to experience our God as the only God and as one God. We also encounter our God as triune: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Our God is present with us and desires a close relationship to us while still remaining “other.”

**Personal relationship:** Our liturgies, however, do not simply present us with an abstract theology of God. Instead, they lead us into a rich and transforming personal and corporate relationship with our God. Furthermore, the appreciation and relationship with God that is expressed and experienced in our liturgical celebrations is relevant to our daily lives.

The Only God

**Liturgal texts** only occasionally allow us to proclaim that our God is the only God. “You are the one God, living and true,” says the preface to Eucharistic Prayer 4. Of course, this is a constant concern of the Hebrew scriptures.

**The uniqueness of our God** is, however, a basic assumption that undergirds the liturgy; it is a constant implicit theme. It is an unbroken thread that unifies all liturgical celebrations, a foundation on which liturgy rests. There is no God but the one true God.

**Every time we name our God** — and we do so frequently in the liturgy — we implicitly state: this is the only true God. And every time we do this we implicitly renounce all idols and false gods. The contemporary world is full of principalities and powers who would deify themselves, who seek our ultimate allegiance, who try to rule our lives, who call us to bow down to them.

**Money, sex, sports,** television, beauty, fame, materialism, consumerism, individualism, power — political, economic, social, or ecclesiastical — and many other forces in our world present themselves as false gods, and they have many adherents. They call to each of us, though sometimes we are unconscious of this; they seek to number us all among their devotees.

**Idols are denounced:** Our liturgical celebrations are a time when we say “no” to all idols, when we draw near to the one true God and reaffirm our deepest allegiance to this God. In our liturgies we gain strength to reject the false gods that call to us in our daily lives.

God Is One

**We worship one God,** not many. The Nicene Creed affirms, “We believe in one God.” Again, this is more a foundation and assumption of our liturgy than something that is stated explicitly.
The unity of God is the pattern for the unity of all creation, a model for the unity of all humankind. We are called to be one with all of creation and with all humanity, to care for all persons and for the whole world, to stand in solidarity with all who are in need, to join with others everywhere to strive for a better world.

You gather (your children) into your Church, to be one as you, Father, are one with your Son and the Holy Spirit.¹

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A Triune God

The liturgical celebrations of the church stress that the only God, the one God, is also triune. We are brought into relationship with the trinity and with the three persons of the trinity. Most prayers – and especially the more formal ones – are prayed to God the first person, prayed through the mediation of Jesus Christ the second person, and prayed in the Holy Spirit the third person.

The pattern of trinitarian prayer and our relationship with the trinitarian God may be thought of as beginning with our baptism “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” We also begin and conclude our Sunday eucharistic celebrations with similar short trinitarian formulas:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

May God bless you, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The trinitarian pattern of Christian prayer is expressed well in the “long conclusion” to the opening prayers:

Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you [God] and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

When the Holy Spirit is not named: When prayers conclude with a “short ending” such as “Through Christ our Lord,” they may refer explicitly to only two persons of the trinity: God and Jesus Christ. In these cases the presence of the Holy Spirit is assumed (see Romans chapter 8, especially verse 26).

Eucharistic Prayers

In the eucharistic prayers the prefaces often begin:

Father, all-powerful and ever-living God, we do well always and everywhere to give you thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord.

After the Holy holy the eucharistic prayers continue:

We come to you, Father²

Lord, you are holy indeed³

---

¹ Preface: Sundays of Ordinary Time 8
² Eucharistic Prayer 1
³ Eucharistic Prayer 2
Father, you are holy indeed
Father in heaven
and all conclude with the same doxology:

Through him [Christ our Lord], with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever. Amen.

The epiclesis or invocation of the Holy Spirit is addressed to God the first person:

Lord . . . let your Spirit come upon these gifts
Father . . . we ask you to make . . . these gifts . . . holy
Father, may this Holy Spirit sanctify these offerings

The first person of the trinity is also addressed in the anamnesis of the eucharistic prayer:

Father, we celebrate the memory of Christ, your Son
In memory of his death and resurrection, we offer you, Father
Father, calling to mind the death your Son endured for our salvation
Father, we now celebrate this memorial of our redemption

The anamnesis always refers to the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ, and leads to the second part of the epiclesis, in which the Holy Spirit is named.

Texts for Trinity Sunday provide an overview of our relationship with the persons of the trinity:

Father, you sent your Word to bring us truth
and your Spirit to make us holy.
Through them we come to know the mystery of your life.
Help us to worship you, one God in three Persons,
by proclaiming and living our faith in you.

We joyfully proclaim our faith
in the mystery of your Godhead.
You have revealed your glory
as the glory also of your Son
and of the Holy Spirit:

---

4 Eucharistic Prayer 3
5 Eucharistic Prayer 4
6 Eucharistic Prayer 2
7 Eucharistic Prayer 3
8 Eucharistic Prayer 4
9 Eucharistic Prayer 1
10 Eucharistic Prayer 2
11 Eucharistic Prayer 3
12 Eucharistic Prayer 4
13 Trinity Sunday, opening prayer

201
three Persons equal in majesty,
undivided in splendor,
yet one Lord, one God,
ever to be adored in your everlasting glory.¹⁴

Other trinitarian texts include the "Glory to God", the professions of faith, and all blessings.

Reflection

The triune nature of God provides a pattern and model for all Christian life and indeed for all human life. The trinity shows us three divine persons in relationship, a relationship of mutuality bonded in love. It shows us a community formed among the three divine persons. This community not only has an inner life of its own as Father, Son and Spirit but also moves out of itself to act in creation as creator, redeemer and sanctifier. God the first person has sent the second and third persons on "missions" to the world (to use the terminology of St Irenaeus of Lyon). Christ and the Spirit are sent because of God’s love for us, and their missions are works of love.

The life of the trinity: We who are baptized in the name of the triune God are adopted into the trinitarian community and share its life (inasmuch as created persons are able to do so). We are then called to bring others into this same relationship with God. As the community of the baptized, we pattern our life on that of the trinity: a true community of persons, living a relationship of mutuality whose bond is love.

The trinity is for us: Though the trinity is ultimately a mystery – how can God be one and three? – it is not simply an abstract doctrine to be taken on faith and speculated upon by scholars. It is for us; it is a model for our lives as individuals and as church.

God Is Present

Our liturgies often begin with "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. / And also with you" (or a similar greeting). The shorter dialogue, "The Lord be with you. / And also with you." is repeated before the gospel is proclaimed, at the beginning of the eucharistic prayer, and just before the final blessing.

A proclamation of faith: This kind of dialogue is a mutual prayer by presider and congregation that God truly be present with the assembly. It is also a proclamation of faith that the triune God is indeed present with us, not only in the liturgy, but also in the whole of our lives. That this dialogue is so frequently exchanged suggests that we need constantly to be reminded and assured of God’s presence with us. Its frequent use also reflects our marvel at the graciousness of God in being always near to us.

¹⁴ Preface: Holy Trinity
God is never absent: Though the language of liturgical celebration makes a point of speaking of God's presence, this does not in any way infer that God is absent from the rest of our lives. Instead, because liturgy is model and pattern for the whole of our lives – individual and ecclesial, we are reminded of God's constant and close presence with us at every moment. God desires to be encountered and experienced by us; God desires to communicate with us and show love for us at all times.

Father and Creator

Only a few liturgical prayers are addressed directly to the first person of the trinity, without any reference to Christ or the Holy Spirit. These include the “I confess to almighty God,” the absolution (“May almighty God have mercy on us”) and the Lord’s Prayer. In addition, some litanies in the rite of Christian initiation of adults and the order of Christian funerals are so addressed.

How do we name the first person of the trinity, and what do we say about our God? The following picture is drawn from the collects of the sacramentary.

Names and titles: In our liturgical prayer we usually name God as God, Lord, or Father. “God,” however, is never used completely by itself; instead, other divine names may be added to form more complex addresses, such as Lord God, Lord our God, and God our Father. In addition, “God” may be used together with descriptive adjectives and nouns, for example, almighty God, God of peace.

“Lord” is the English descendent of the YHWH of the Hebrew scriptures by way of the intermediary name adonai (Greek: kurios; Latin: dominus) that was used to avoid speaking the tetragrammaton. (“Lord” at the beginning of a liturgical prayer usually refers to the first person of the trinity. At the end of such prayers, it refers to Jesus Christ.)

“Father”: In our Latin prayer heritage, the divine name “Father” is used sparingly. Besides the Lord’s Prayer and trinitarian formulas (the sign of the cross, the “Glory be” and similar doxologies, the baptismal formula), Father is used principally at the beginning of eucharistic prayers and in the anamnesis of the eucharistic prayers. Its use is rare in collects. In contrast to this Latin tradition, Father is used frequently in our present English sacramentary.

Images and attributes: In addition to a divine name, the beginnings of prayers may contain a word or phrase that describes God in some way; these may be used together with any of the divine names or combinations of divine names. What these terms tell us about God is shown in the following list.

- God is all-powerful (or almighty), creator, eternal (or ever-living), ever-present, holy, unchanging and unseen.
- God is our guide, light, protector, redeemer, savior, shepherd, source of blessings, and source of light.
- God is a God of comfort, compassion, consolation, freedom, goodness, holiness, life, light, love, peace, providence, truth, and wisdom.
• God is the Father in heaven, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Father of the lowly, Father of all, God of all gifts, God of our fathers, and God of the living and the dead.

This is a beautiful and profound view of God, and each attribute deserves both our contemplation and an extended commentary. Our God is both imminent and transcendent; both creator and redeemer; God of our ancestors yesterday, our guide today, and the goal of our lives; the Father of Jesus and our Father too; utterly other but not distant or forbidding.

This range of attributes and descriptions of God used in the present sacramentary or as shown above is far broader than was the case in the missal of 1574. However only three of these terms (all-powerful, eternal, merciful and their synonyms) are used frequently.

The prefaces also speak about our God:

We see your infinite power
in your loving plan of salvation.
You came to our rescue by your power as God,
but you wanted us to be saved by one like us.\(^{15}\)

All things are of your making,
all times and seasons obey your laws,
but you chose to create [us] in your own image,
setting [us] over the whole world in all its wonder.
You made [humankind] the steward of creation,
to praise you day by day
for the marvels of your wisdom and power . . . .\(^{16}\)

In you we live and move and have our being.
Each day you show us a Father's love . . . .\(^{17}\)

So great was your love
that you gave us your Son as our redeemer.\(^{18}\)

When your children sinned
and wandered far from your friendship,
you reunited them with yourself
through the blood of your Son
and the power of the Holy Spirit.\(^{19}\)

Therefore it is your right
to receive the obedience of all creation,
the praise of the Church on earth,
the thanksgiving of your saints in heaven.\(^{20}\)

You have no need of our praise,
yet our desire to thank you is itself your gift.

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\(^{15}\) Preface: Sundays of Ordinary Time 3
\(^{16}\) Preface: Sundays of Ordinary Time 5
\(^{17}\) Preface: Sundays of Ordinary Time 6
\(^{18}\) Preface: Sundays of Ordinary Time 7
\(^{19}\) Preface: Sundays of Ordinary Time 8
\(^{20}\) Preface: Weekdays of Ordinary Time 3

204
Our prayer of thanksgiving adds nothing to your greatness, 
but makes us grow in your grace, 
through Jesus Christ our Lord. 21

The eucharistic prayers also contribute to our appreciation of God:

Lord, you are holy indeed, 
the fountain of all holiness. 22

Father, you are holy indeed, 
and all creation rightly gives you praise. 
All life, all holiness comes from you . . . .
From age to age you gather a people to yourself, 
so that from east to west 
a perfect offering may be made 
to the glory of your name. 23

Through all eternity you live in unapproachable light. 
Source of life and goodness, you have created all things, 
to fill your creatures with every blessing 
and lead all . . . to the joyful vision of your light. 24

Father, we acknowledge your greatness: 
all your actions show your wisdom and love . . . .
Father, you so loved the world . . . . 25

Reflection

Because these texts are prayers, we use them to speak directly to God; we 
are not engaging in abstract discussions about the nature of God. They 
express many facets of our relationship with God the first person and the myri­
ad ways in which God has shown care and love for us. Each deserves to be 
considered at greater depth in the preaching of our liturgical assemblies as 
well as in our private contemplation. Each is relevant to our relationship to God 
in daily life as well as in liturgical celebration.

Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ, the second person of the trinity, is the constant focus of our 
liturgical celebrations.

Many nonverbal elements of the liturgy point to Christ. The cross of Christ is 
carried at the head of processions and stands near the altar. We make the 
sign of the cross at the beginning and end of the eucharistic celebration and

21 Preface: Weekdays of Ordinary Time 4
22 Eucharistic Prayer 2
23 Eucharistic Prayer 3
24 Eucharistic Prayer 4, Preface
25 Eucharistic Prayer 4
before the gospel, and the priest makes it over the bread and wine at the epi-
clesis of the eucharistic prayer. Candidates are welcomed into the catechume-
nate by having the cross of Christ traced on their body.

The major pieces of liturgical furnishing: altar, font, ambo and chair, also
point to Christ and his leadership of the community’s worship.

The baptismal water at the door of the church, the rite of blessing and sprin-
kling water at the beginning of the eucharistic liturgy, and the sign of peace
also point to Christ and are signs of his presence.

The consecrated bread and wine – Christ’s sacramental body and blood –
are of course central to the eucharistic liturgy. And they are not just to be
looked upon, but to be shared through eating and drinking.

We proclaim our faith in Christ in the Apostles’ and Nicene creeds, and
speak of Christ in many of our liturgical acclamations. In addition, many lita-
nies are addressed to him. The prayer before the sign of peace as well as the
Lamb of God are directed to Christ.

The story of Jesus Christ is told in many of the prefaces:

He is the true Lamb who took away the sins of the world.
By dying he destroyed our death;
by rising he restored our life.

He has made us children of the light,
rising to new and everlasting life.
He has opened the gates of heaven
to receive his faithful people.
His death is our ransom from death;
his resurrection is our rising to life.

He is still our priest,
our advocate who always pleads our cause.
Christ is the victim who dies no more,
the Lamb, once slain, who lives for ever.

In him a new age has dawned,
the long reign of sin is ended,
a broken world has been renewed,
and [humanity] is once again made whole.

As he offered his body on the cross,
his perfect sacrifice fulfilled all others.
As he gave himself into your hands for our salvation,
he showed himself to be the priest, the altar,
and the lamb of sacrifice.

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26 Preface: Easter 1
27 Preface: Easter 2
28 Preface: Easter 3
29 Preface: Easter 4
30 Preface: Easter 5
Christ, the mediator between God and [humankind],
judge of the world and Lord of all,
has passed beyond our sight,
not to abandon us but to be our hope.
Christ is the beginning, the head of the Church;
where he has gone, we hope to follow.31

He is the Word through whom you made the universe,
the Savior you sent to redeem us.
By the power of the Holy Spirit
he took flesh and was born of the Virgin Mary.
For our sake he opened his arms on the cross;
he put an end to death
and revealed the resurrection.
In this he fulfilled your will
and won for you a holy people.32

Christ's life and ministry is summarized in the first part of Eucharistic Prayer 4:

He was conceived
through the power of the Holy Spirit,
and born of the Virgin Mary,
[fully human] like us in all things but sin.
To the poor he proclaimed the good news of salvation,
to prisoners, freedom,
and to those in sorrow, joy.
In fulfillment of your will
he gave himself up to death;
but by rising from the dead,
he destroyed death and restored life.
And that we might live
no longer for ourselves but for him,
he sent the Holy Spirit from you, Father,
as his first gift to those who believe,
to complete his work on earth
and bring us the fullness of grace.

Christ's institution of the eucharist at the last supper is introduced in several different ways, for example:

Before he was given up to death,
a death he freely accepted . . .33

He always loved those who were his own in the world.
When the time came
for him to be glorified by you, his heavenly Father,
he showed the depth of his love.34

31 Preface: Ascension
32 Eucharistic Prayer 2, Preface
33 Eucharistic Prayer 2
34 Eucharistic Prayer 3
The institution itself is described as follows:

He took bread and gave you thanks and praise.
He broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:
Take this, all of you, and eat it:
this is my body which will be given up for you.

When supper was ended, he took the cup.
Again he gave you thanks and praise,
gave the cup to his disciples, and said:
Take this, all of you, and drink from it:
this is the cup of my blood,
the blood of the new and everlasting covenant.
It will be shed for you and for all
so that sins may be forgiven.
Do this in memory of me.

Death and Resurrection

Every liturgy is a celebration of the paschal mystery: the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the liturgy of the eucharist this is proclaimed especially in the section of the eucharistic prayers that follows the institution narrative (the anamnesis):

Father,
we celebrate the memory of Christ, your Son.
We, your people and your ministers,
recall his passion,
his resurrection from the dead,
and his ascension into glory . . . 35

In memory of his death and resurrection . . . 36

Father, calling to mind
the death your Son endured for our salvation,
his glorious resurrection and ascension into heaven . . . 37

Father, we now celebrate
this memorial of our redemption.
We recall Christ's death, his descent among the dead,
his resurrection, and his ascension to your right hand . . . 38

In the memorial acclamation we sing:

Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.

Dying you destroyed our death,
rising you restored our life.
Lord Jesus, come in glory.

35 Eucharistic Prayer 1
36 Eucharistic Prayer 2
37 Eucharistic Prayer 3
38 Eucharistic Prayer 4
Christ’s Presence

Today we are aware of the multiple modes of Christ’s presence in the liturgy. He is present in the liturgical assembly — his body the church in this time and place. Christ is present in the word proclaimed and preached. He is present in the ordained minister. Christ is present in his body and blood under the forms of bread and wine.

Finally, several acclamations (in addition to the memorial acclamations) are addressed to Christ, who is assumed to be present with us.

- Before and after the gospel:
  
  Glory to you, Lord.
  Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

- Before communion:
  
  Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed.

Christian Initiation

Christ is at the centre of the liturgies of Christian initiation, as the following representative texts indicate:

In the waters of the Jordan your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Spirit.

Your Son willed that water and blood should flow from his side as he hung upon the cross.

After his resurrection he told his disciples: “Go out and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, the Father’s only Son, for you offered yourself on the cross, that in the blood and water flowing from your side and through your death and resurrection the Church might be born.

Make this water holy, Lord, so that all who are baptized into Christ’s death and resurrection by this water may become more perfectly like your Son.

[God] now anoints you with the chrism of salvation, so that, united with his people, you may remain for ever a member of Christ who is Priest, Prophet, and King.

39 RCIA, Baptism for Children: Prayer over the water 1
40 RCIA, Baptism for Children: Prayer over the water 2
41 RCIA, Baptism for Children: Prayer over the water 2
42 RCIA, Anointing after baptism
You have become a new creation
and have clothed yourselves in Christ.\textsuperscript{43}

You have been enlightened by Christ.\textsuperscript{44}

Reflection

Jesus Christ is Lamb, savior, priest, advocate, mediator, judge, Lord, word and fully human. He loves us, died and rose again for us, and is always present. Again, the legacy of our liturgical prayer not only presents us with a rich christology, but leads us into a close relationship with Christ.

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**Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit, the third person of the trinity, is less prominent in our liturgical prayers but no less important than the other two persons. Without the Spirit, there would be no prayer (Romans 8); without the Spirit, there would be no sanctification; without the Spirit, there would be no church.

The Holy Spirit is included in the trinitarian doxologies and in the professions of faith.

The Spirit is also referred to in several prefaces:

Your Spirit was seen as a dove,
revealing Jesus as your servant,
and anointing him with joy as the Christ.\textsuperscript{45}

Today you sent the Holy Spirit
on those marked out to be your children
by sharing the life of your only Son,
and so you brought the paschal mystery to its completion.

Today we celebrate the great beginnings of your Church
when the Holy Spirit made known to all peoples
the one true God,
and created from the many [human] languages
one voice to profess one faith.\textsuperscript{46}

Each day you show us a Father’s love;
your Holy Spirit, dwelling within us,
gives us on earth the hope of unending joy.

Your gift of the Spirit,
who raised Jesus from the dead,
is the foretaste and promise
of the paschal feast of heaven.\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{43} RCIA, Clothing with a baptismal garment

\textsuperscript{44} RCIA, Presentation of a lighted candle

\textsuperscript{45} Preface: Baptism of the Lord

\textsuperscript{46} Preface: Pentecost

\textsuperscript{47} Preface: Sundays of Ordinary Time 6

210
[Christ] ascended above all the heavens,  
and from his throne at your right hand  
poured into the hearts of your adopted children  
the Holy Spirit of your promise.⁴⁸

You give your gifts of grace  
for every time and season  
as you guide the Church  
in the marvellous ways of your providence.  
You give us your Holy Spirit  
to help us always by his power,  
so that with loving trust  
we may turn to you in all our troubles,  
and give you thanks in all our joys.⁴⁹

Eucharistic prayer 4 adds:

And that we might live  
no longer for ourselves but for him,  
he sent the Holy Spirit from you, Father,  
as his first gift to those who believe,  
to complete his work on earth  
and bring us the fullness of grace.

The transforming and sanctifying work of the Spirit is especially prominent in  
the epiclesis of the eucharistic prayers. The first part of the epiclesis asks that  
the Spirit transform the bread and wine presented as gifts; the second part asks  
for the transformation of the faithful people who will share holy communion.

Let your Spirit come upon these gifts  
to make them holy,  
so that they may become for us  
the body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

May all of us who share in the body and blood of Christ  
be brought together in unity by the Holy Spirit.⁵⁰

And so, Father, we bring you these gifts.  
We ask you to make them holy  
by the power of your Spirit,  
that they may become the body and blood  
of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,  
at whose command we celebrate this eucharist.

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.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Preface: Holy Spirit 1  
⁴⁹ Preface: Holy Spirit 2  
⁵⁰ Eucharistic Prayer 2  
⁵¹ Eucharistic Prayer 3
Father, may this Holy Spirit sanctify these offerings.
Let them become the body and blood
of Jesus Christ our Lord . . . .

. . . And by your Holy Spirit,
gather all who share this bread and wine
into the one body of Christ, a living sacrifice of praise.52

The Holy Spirit is also prominent in the liturgies of Christian initiation:

Father, look now with love upon your Church
and unseal for it the fountain of baptism.
By the power of the Holy Spirit
give to this water the grace of your Son,
so that in the sacrament of baptism
all those whom you have created in your likeness
may be cleansed from sin
and rise to a new birth of innocence
by water and the Holy Spirit.
We ask you, Father, with your Son
to send the Holy Spirit upon the waters of this font.
May all who are buried with Christ in the death of baptism
rise also with him to newness of life.53

Praise to you, God the Holy Spirit,
for you anointed Christ at his baptism in the water
of the Jordan
so that we might all be baptized in you.
Lord, make holy this water which you have created,
so that all those whom you have chosen
may be born again by the power of the Holy Spirit
and may take their place among your holy people.54

From all who are baptized in water and the Holy Spirit
you have formed one people,
united in your Son Jesus Christ.
You have set us free
and filled our hearts with the Spirit of your love,
that we may live in your peace.55

God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has freed you from sin,
given you a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit
and welcomed you into his holy people.56

All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
by water and the Holy Spirit
you freed your sons and daughters from sin
and gave them new life.

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52 Eucharistic Prayer 4
53 RCIA, Baptism for Children: prayer over the water 1
54 RCIA, Baptism for Children: prayer over the water 2
55 RCIA, Baptism for Children: prayer over the water 3
56 Baptism for Children, anointing after baptism
Send your Holy Spirit upon them
to be their helper and guide.
Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of right judgment and courage,
the spirit of knowledge and reverence.
Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence.\footnote{57}

N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
Peace be with you. And also with you.\footnote{58}

\textbf{Finally, the collects for Pentecost} show that the Spirit is a constant, living
and active reality in our lives:

God our Father,
let the Spirit you sent on your Church
to begin the teaching of the gospel
continue to work in the world
through the hearts of all who believe.\footnote{59}

Lord, may the Spirit you promised
lead us into all truth
and reveal to us the full meaning of this sacrifice.\footnote{60}

Keep within us the vigor of your Spirit
and protect the gifts you have given to your Church.\footnote{61}

\section*{Reflection}

\textbf{The Holy Spirit} reveals, anoints, unites, gives hope and joy, empowers, sanctifies, transforms, protects, and gives peace. Through the Holy Spirit we are recreated and reborn. The Holy Spirit is a great gift to us, and is always present with us.
How Do We Pray?

Liturgical celebration, Vatican Council II stated, is the source and font of the whole of Christian life. Among the liturgies of the church the Sunday eucharist is the central act of the Christian community. It is the time when the local church is most fully visible and most completely itself. Individually and as church, we are liturgical people.

The centrality of liturgical prayer for us as church sets the pattern for the whole of our lives. We are persons of prayer: praying is intrinsic to our humanity. We value prayer and we pass on the heritage and habit of prayer to catechumens and to children.

How to pray: In addition to showing us that we are persons who pray, our liturgical prayer shows us how to pray: it provides the pattern and model for our praying.

Dialogue

The prayers of our liturgy show us that a fundamental dynamic of prayer is dialogue. At the level of liturgical celebration the dialogue is carried out between leaders (presider, deacon, readers, musicians) and the congregation. At a deeper level, the dialogue is between God and God's people.

Many kinds of dialogue: The following examples show that the liturgy includes a variety of forms of dialogue.

• Mutual greeting and prayer:
  The Lord be with you./ And also with you.

• Invitation followed by silent prayer:
  Let us pray./ Silent prayer.
  As we prepare to celebrate the mystery of Christ’s love, let us acknowledge our failures, and ask the Lord for pardon and strength:/ Silent prayer.

• Litanies:
  You were sent to heal the contrite: Lord, have mercy./
  Lord, have mercy . . .

• Prayer followed by Amen:
  May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life./ Amen.

• Proclamation followed by other acclamations:
  This is the word of the Lord. / Thanks be to God.
  This is the gospel of the Lord./
  Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.
Patterns for personal prayer: Many if not all of these kinds of liturgical dialogue provide patterns that also guide our prayer during the week. Some dialogues do require the presence of other persons, but in a number of cases they are applicable even when we are alone.

In dialogue we come face to face with the other; we have a relationship with the one with whom we speak. In the case of prayer God takes the initiative, and we respond; it is an example of God's love and care for us. We cannot dialogue with someone who is totally absent; God is present with us and for us in prayer.

Dialogue is an experience of mutuality and respect between the partners. Each listens to the other; each speaks. The partners are open to what each other says, and hence open to hearing the unexpected; dialogue is a waiting for surprises. Dialogue is an action; it is participatory – there can be no completely passive partner in a dialogue.
Embodied

In the liturgy we pray not only in silence, but also verbally; not only in speech, but also in song. Our prayer has both verbal and nonverbal elements. It is, in fact, an action of whole, embodied persons. Our personal prayer during the week is also that of embodied persons.

Space and environment: We pray within a space, in an environment. For our liturgical prayer we use a special space, which we plan and arrange in order to facilitate our prayer. There is furniture, art and decoration. The environment in which our weekday prayer takes place likewise can be influential, either positively or negatively. Though we cannot choose the space for all of our weekday prayer, using a special prayer space of some kind can be helpful.

Posture, gesture, movement: We pray liturgically using posture, gesture and movement. We stand, sit and perhaps kneel. We walk, use our hands, and touch. Today we are more appreciative than ever of the importance of a helpful posture for personal prayer, of patterns of breathing, and the possible usefulness of gesture. We may pray by holding a book or touching a cross.

Other senses: We pray liturgically by seeing, hearing and smelling. So too in our personal prayer: we may light a candle, place a cross where we can see it, gaze at an icon, burn incense.

We pray using symbols and actions. In the liturgy there is the cross, book, lights, water, bread and wine, oil, flowers. There is the kiss of peace, the collection, eating and drinking, bathing, laying on of hands, etc. Our personal prayer during the week will not be as rich in this regard as the Sunday eucharist, but symbols and actions are always part of the prayer of whole, embodied persons.

Time

Our liturgy recognizes that we live in time, and we observe the rhythm of time in a variety of ways. We have morning and evening prayer; we pray on Sundays and weekdays. We acknowledge the seasons and the year; the natural rhythm of long and short days, and special feast days. We celebrate the past and the present and look forward to the future; we remember and hope; we envision an alternative future.

The rhythms of time: In our personal prayer we follow the same rhythms of time. We pray in the morning and evening and at the time of our meals. Our prayer on the Lord's day recognizes the centrality of the Sunday eucharist of the community. We acknowledge Christmas and Easter and the seasons that precede and follow them; we know that there are special feast days and anniversaries of birth, baptism, marriage, ordination and religious profession. We pray at the regular meetings of the groups and organizations to which we belong.

Past, present, future: In our personal prayer we remember God's presence with us – and with all God's people – in the past. This is not a pious history lesson, but a basis for praise, confession and conversion; it is our profession of faith that God is present with us today and every day of our lives. And we
always look forward to the future; to tomorrow and the day after, and to the
day of our death and the day after that. We look forward to a future that is dif-
ferent than yesterday and today, when our relationship with God, with our-
selves, with others and with creation will be more whole than it is now. We look
forward to healing and to opportunities to share the Good News with others.

Alone and with Others

Our liturgical celebrations generally involve more than one person, and ide-
ally should involve the community; they are always celebrations of the church.

With other persons: During the week we pray with other persons as well. We
pray with our families and households; with friends; with those with whom we
witness and strive for justice; in all kinds of intentional groups; at meetings and
other gatherings. This is an important dimension of our personal prayer.

We also pray alone, but even then we are never isolated, never totally cut off
from the community; we continue the prayer of the church in our own personal
way. We are supported by the community of which we are part, and we pray in
solidarity with the other members of the community, who are praying in solidar-
ity with us. We pray for other persons, and we ask them to pray for us and for
our intentions.

The Word of God

The word of God is central to our liturgical prayer: we proclaim, interpret and
apply, and respond to the scriptures. We use psalms and canticles from the
bible with which to respond to other readings. We prepare for the Sunday litur-
gy—especially if we preach—by diligent study of the readings, which itself can
be a form of prayer.

The word of God is also central to our weekday personal prayer. We read
scripture, not as history or literature, but as prayer: as God’s revelation that
calls forth our personal response. We may read scripture aloud with others
(family, friends, at meetings) or silently by ourselves. We may also study the
bible in a prayerful way, a way that is quite different than classroom or aca-
demic study.

The prayerful reading of scripture does not leave the biblical message in the
past. Instead, we interpret and apply it to ourselves and to the circumstances of
our lives today. It is the word of God for us now, and it calls us to respond in
silence, in praise, confession, conversion, and in action and ministry.

Silence

Silence helps to make the liturgy personal. It is the involvement of the person
in the sacred act of prayer, so that when the presider prays, it is a collecting of
the prayers of the assembly; or when the reader proclaims the Word of God,
each member internalizes the proclaimed word.
In silent prayer we respond to the word and touch of the Holy One, whether this comes to us through the words spoken aloud or in the inner movement of our hearts and spirits. We wait, we listen, we respond, we pour out our hearts. In silent prayer we are never alone, though it sometimes seems that way. We are bonded in solidarity with other persons, and we are always in the presence of our God.

A Variety of Religious Sentiments

Sundays and weekdays: Our experience of silent prayer on Sunday leads to longer periods of silent prayer during the week. Our experience of weekday silent prayer enriches our silent prayer at the Sunday eucharist. In silence we wait upon our God to speak to us, and in silence we pour out our hearts in response to the presence of our God.

Our liturgical prayer expresses a variety of sentiments. We pray in praise, thanksgiving, confession, petition, intercession, reconciliation, dedication and commitment. We ask for conversion and healing and assure ourselves of God's love and mercy. We pray in memory of the past and in hope of the future.

Asking and Thanking

Mood and orientation: Our personal prayer during the week also is varied in its mood and orientation. Sometimes it is praise, sometimes confession. At one time we ask of God for ourselves, at other times we ask on behalf of others. We move from remembering the past to looking forward in confidence and hope to a new future. There is no excuse for getting into a rut.

Asking God (petitionary prayer) and thanking God (prayer of thanksgiving or praise) are two basic forms and sentiments of prayer. These are not opposed but complementary; they are not exclusive but coextensive.

The human situation: When we make a request of another person, we reveal our personal weakness and show that human beings depend on one another. Our request is based on an acknowledgment of dependence and on a humble appreciation of the human situation: the inability of women and men to do exactly what they want to do all by themselves.

Trust and hope: We also bear witness to a mutual trust. We hope that our confession of need will not be rejected or ridiculed. We look forward to a friendly acceptance and generous response to our predicament. We hope that our request will be fulfilled. In a certain way, the more we ask the greater our trust in the person to whom we turn.

The strength of a trust, whether between God and human beings or between human beings, is always measured by the amount of room which is made for personal weaknesses, imperfections and needs. It is a special demonstration of trust when we can express our existential needs to other people and to friends. We always do this in the hope that the other person will hold fast even when mistakes and weaknesses become evident. Trust
grows in personal relationships where we become free from the pressure of always having to cut a strong, independent, almost impeccable figure. Where we ask, we venture in a concrete way not to suppress or to cover up such need and inner distress, but to recognize it. We concede it and in so doing also become a little more true, a little more human.¹

**Thanksgiving:** What is the relationship between petitionary prayer and thanksgiving? First, whenever we ask God something, we give thanks at least implicitly. We know how much our prayers are undeserved, that we have no claim or merit but still are accepted; the Spirit moves us to pray — and we give thanks. Going further, we know that we have been created by God without deserving this and without any real necessity; we are created and redeemed. We are in no position to become presumptuous or arrogant; we cannot force God to become concerned with our human life — but God is concerned. This leads to thanksgiving and praise; it also leads to petition. We are not begging before a begrudging God, but expressing our worth.

Thanking God focuses our attention on the graciousness of God. If we recognize the many gifts that come from above, it instills an attitude of trust and confidence: God has acted in the past, therefore, we may be confident that we will not be abandoned today or tomorrow. Praise and thanksgiving lead to supplication.

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**Kinds of Verbal Prayer**

**Our liturgical celebrations** teach and encourage us to use a wide variety of verbal prayer forms. We need never get in a rut if we let liturgical prayer be our guide.

**The litany:** Litanies are composed of short verses, followed by a relatively constant refrain. The verses may be brief prayers of praise, thanksgiving, or petition, or may be statements telling about God's marvelous deeds in the past, particularly in the life of Jesus. The response may be a prayer of petition (Lord, hear our prayer), of praise or thanks (Blessed be God forever), or of confession, (Lord, have mercy or have mercy on us). If we are alone we may still say both verse and response.

**The collect:** The opening prayer is an example of a collect. We first address God using a name or title of God and some attribute or quality of God. Then we make some statement about God or God's action in the past that provides a basis for thinking that God will answer our petition. The petition, usually using a verb in the imperative (for example, teach us, guide us, stir us up), is the central part of this form of prayer. We may then mention a result that will follow if the prayer is answered. Finally, we conclude with a trinitarian ending or simply with "through Jesus Christ our Lord" and "Amen." The collect is a good model for our personal prayers, and they are not too difficult to compose.²

Confession and absolution: Evening is a traditional time of day to look back, make an examination of conscience, and pray to God in confession for the weaknesses and sins of omission and commission of that day. But we may also pray to express our confidence in God’s mercy, love and forgiveness. Using the “I confess” as a model, we may ask other members of the church, living or dead, to pray on our behalf. We may also pray on behalf of those who have asked our prayers for them.

Profession of faith: The Apostles’ and Nicene creeds used at the Sunday eucharist may also be used in our personal prayer. Other professions of faith of a less formal or less official nature may also be used during the week. Composing a creed is a good exercise.

Intercessions: Here we pray for the needs of the church and the world, for persons afflicted by any need, and for the local community. The general intercessions are our model for such prayers.3

Lord’s Prayer: The prayer given by Jesus to his disciples has been a part of Christian personal prayer since the beginning of the church.

Doxologies and acclamations: Doxologies are short prayers of praise, and often name the trinity. They are used in the liturgy and may be helpful in our personal prayer as well. Liturgical doxologies may be used like the ejaculations of yesteryear:

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.
Through [Christ], in him, and with him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.

Liturgical acclamations may also be employed as short, spontaneous prayers during the week.

Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.
Dying you destroyed our death, rising you restored our life. Lord Jesus, come in glory.
Lord, by your cross and resurrection you have set us free. You are the Savior of the world.
Glory to you, Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Psalms and scripture: The psalms which were used as the traditional prayer in the liturgy of the temple were then used for personal prayer.

Great prayers of thanksgiving: The eucharistic prayer is also a model for our personal prayer, as a whole and in its several sections.

Blessing: We praise and thank God by remembering God’s gracious deeds in creation and salvation history, culminating in the life and ministry of Jesus

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220
Christ and the sending of the Holy Spirit. This kind of prayer can arise out of our prayerful reading of scripture.

**Invocation:** We ask God to send the Holy Spirit to transform not only the bread and wine of the eucharist, but also we who will share Christ's body and blood. We ask that we be enabled to live the values of God's reign: unity and peace. We are fortunate that there is a renewed appreciation of the Holy Spirit in the church today. The Spirit is God's agent of transformation and sanctification.

**Institution:** We recall Christ's institution of the eucharist by quoting his words and recalling his command to "do this" in his memory. Remembering the words in which Christ interpreted the meaning of the eucharist can be a helpful basis for prayer:

- This is my body which will be given up for you.
- This is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant.
- It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven.

**Memorial or Anamnesis:** We proclaim our faithfulness to Christ's command by recalling his death, resurrection, descent to the dead, ascension, and seating at God's right hand, and we offer his life – and our own – to God. To proclaim the Lord's death and resurrection strengthens our faith in God's presence and concern for us, both in tragedy and in joy, and reminds us that God's actions are not confined to the past, or to the lives of others. God is God of all; God is God of all time: yesterday, today, tomorrow and for ever.

**Intercession and anticipation:** We remember the church, and look forward to a new future. The spirituality of the liturgy forces us out of our little world, so that, not only do we pray for our own needs, but we remember the needs of the Church throughout the world – Christians everywhere who face the same problems and challenges of living a life of faith.

**Doxology:** Finally, we praise and thank God again, and conclude by proclaiming the Great Amen.

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**Music**

**Liturgical prayer,** for the most part, is intrinsically musical. We sing, we respond in song to what cantors sing, and we pray by listening to instrumental music as well. We use a variety of forms of musical prayer: hymns and songs, responsorial psalms, acclamations, processional songs, etc.

We would do well to make our weekday personal prayer musical as well, at least to some degree. We can do this when we pray with others, and we need to develop a repertoire of simple but good songs to use when small groups gather for prayer. When necessary and helpful, recorded music can support our sung prayer.
What Is Our Relationship With God

The liturgical celebrations of the Christian people speak to us about our God and about our own relationship with God. Several dimensions of this relationship will be considered briefly here.

Created and Recreated

We have been created by God, together with other persons, animals and the inanimate world. We have been made in God’s image, male and female, and given stewardship – not ownership – of the rest of creation. We have great dignity because of our relationship with God through creation.

We are embodied creatures, and body and spirit constitute a unity. It follows that both nonverbal and verbal communication are important for us.

We are created as individuals and as part of the human family. We stand in solidarity with other women and men, and work with them to build a better world. At the same time we value our own individuality and honor that of others.

Though imperfect and fragile in many ways, we know that God loves for us and cares for us; we are basically good. God’s love for us has been shown especially in the life and ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and in the sending of the Holy Spirit to be with us and guide us.

Though sinners and frail, we have been redeemed, recreated, forgiven, justified by God – as a free gift to us.

Called and Chosen

Our creation is not accidental or simply a random event. Instead, we are called by God, chosen to be God’s own children through baptism, named by God as one of God’s own. God gives us so many gifts: faith, grace, love, dignity. We are adopted into God’s own family and into the community of faith. We are given memory to know God’s relations with people in the past. We are given hope and imagination to see that God will continue to be faithful and present with us in the future. We believe in God’s promises to care for us always.

God has loved us: We know that God has chosen and called us not because of any merits of our own, but simply out of God’s love:

It was not because you were more numerous than any other people that the Lord set his heart on you and chose you – for you were the fewest of all peoples. It was because the Lord had loved you and kept the oath that he swore to our ancestors. (Deuteronomy 7: 7-8)

We have been called to give witness to God’s love for the whole world and continue the ministry of Jesus Christ.
People of the Word

God communicates with us in a privileged way through the word. This word is first of all the person of Jesus Christ, and then the scriptures. God speaks to us, we listen and respond. We interpret the biblical word and apply it to our own times and our own lives.

Gathered and Sent Forth

We live active lives in which we respond to God's love. We do not walk alone but with others, especially other members of the Christian community. We gather together with others to live our lives as social creatures, to work and play and study with others, to live as households, to celebrate our liturgies, to continue the ministry of Jesus Christ individually and with others.

Christ sends us into every corner of our society and the world to witness to God's love and serve those in need. We are sent forth at the conclusion of every liturgy, we go forth at the beginning of every day. Our daily lives as well as our liturgical celebrations embody God's call to us to live as disciples, witnesses and ministers.

Baptized

In baptism we are called to conversion – to turn away from what is not God and towards the one true God. We are called to become adopted sisters and brothers of Jesus Christ, adopted members of God's family. We are cleansed by God and we respond in praise and thanksgiving. God purifies us in order to witness and serve. Through the baptismal bath we join Jesus Christ in his death and resurrection, and then are anointed priest, prophet and king to show our close relationship to him. Baptism confers enormous dignity, and brings forth a humble but committed response.

Eucharistic

God sustains and nourishes us not only with food and drink from creation, but also and especially with the sacramental body and blood of Jesus Christ. We present gifts of bread and wine from the created order to God; they are transformed through the sanctifying action of the Holy Spirit; we give praise and thanks to God for everything God has done; and we share the holy meal. As a result of this eating and drinking, and through the agency of the Holy Spirit, we ourselves are transformed and go forth to be transformed persons for the sake of God's reign. In the eucharistic meal Christ is guest, host and food.

In the eucharistic liturgy we give praise and thanks, we bless God for all God is and all God has done for our ancestors and us. We are confident that God will continue to bless us in the future as in the past. We tell the story of God's deeds and words, and in awe and gratitude invoke the transforming presence of the Holy Spirit. We tell about Jesus' institution of the eucharist and its meaning, and his command to do this in his memory. We pray for the church and for the coming of God's Reign, and conclude by praising the holy trinity.
All of our lives

Our liturgies show us that God continues to be active and present through the whole of our lives. Marriage, ordination, religious profession, reconciliation, anointing of the sick, viaticum for the dying and Christian burial all show the manifold dimensions of our relationship with God.

Other Notes

Bulletins for 1991

After consultation with the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy and the National Council for Liturgy, these topics are planned for volume 24 of the National Bulletin on Liturgy in 1991:

**The Eucharistic Prayer:** Bulletin 124, March. The eucharistic prayer is the central prayer of our eucharistic liturgy. It is the prayer of the entire liturgical assembly, and not just of the priest. What is a eucharistic prayer in form and content? How can the participation of lay people in the eucharistic prayer be facilitated? What is the message of each of the nine official eucharistic prayers?

**The Communion Rite:** Bulletin 125, June. The third part of the liturgy of the eucharist is the communion rite. What is its meaning? How can participation be improved? What is the role of music? Questions arise regarding lay ministers of communion, the bread and wine used for communion, and communion from the cup.

**Solemnities of Our Lord:** Bulletin 126, September. In addition to Christmas, Epiphany, the Baptism of our Lord, Easter, and Pentecost, other important solemnities and feasts of our Lord are celebrated each year: the Presentation of the Lord, Holy Trinity, Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, Sacred Heart, Transfiguration, Triumph of the Cross, and Christ the King. These liturgies will be considered in depth.

**Catholic Book of Worship III:** Bulletin 127, December. This issue will describe the contents of our new national hymnal and its rationale, and will suggest ways of introducing it to parishes and making best use of the resources it contains.
How Do We Live Ministerial Lives?

The liturgy provides patterns and models for our own ministry and that of the church as a whole. It shows us that all those who worship are called to live ministerial lives and it models diverse ways in which members of the worshiping assembly are to minister in their daily lives.

Ministry by All

Because our liturgical celebrations involve a variety of ordained and lay ministers, they show us that all baptized persons are called to live ministerial lives. If we think of the liturgy as pattern and model of the whole of our lives, we may conclude that ministry is normative for the church as a whole and for its individual ministers.

The assembly: Today we think of the liturgical assembly as a whole and in each member as the primary human minister of the liturgy. Only after this is established – and appreciated in practice – can we see the roles of individual ministers in their proper light. Ministry, therefore, is not something for a few but for everyone.

In baptism all are anointed priest, prophet, leader; all are baptized into servanthood. All are called to full, active, conscious and fruitful participation in the ministering church. We minister as part of the church whether we minister alone or together with others.

Families as ministers: Appreciating that all ministry is that of the church also shows us that households – the “domestic church” – are called to be ministerial. This is true as well of other groups, committees, commissions, societies and associations within the church. All are called to ministry, though this is expressed and exercised in different ways.

Individual Gifts

The gifts received in creation and in baptism constitute and respect our individuality. Each person ministers in a unique way.

In baptism we are called, gifted, and empowered for ministry. But gifts need to be discerned, both by ourselves and by those around us – family, friends, coworkers, the church community. Often we need training and education in order to develop our gifts. Encouragement, support and positive criticism helps us use our gifts well. We should also be thanked and we should thank God; we also need regular rest and refreshment.
Particular Ministries

The many individual ministries exercised in preparation for and in the course of our liturgical celebrations are models for individual and communal ministry during the week. In a certain way the liturgical ministries bring these weekday ministries into our worshipping assemblies.

Preparation: Liturgy needs to be prepared ahead of time. Decisions and choices have to be made, materials have to be obtained, readings and music need to be rehearsed, studied and prayed over, space and furniture need to be arranged. Preparation is necessary for a liturgy to be the best possible celebration for a particular assembly on a particular occasion. This may not always be done at all or done with the care that might be hoped for; it may not be carried out in a collaborative way.

The ministry of liturgical preparation should model ministries of preparation in our households, schools and the church as a whole, as well as in society. Preparation sometimes seems to be a sadly neglected ministry; parishes, dioceses, and other dimensions of the church do not seem to do much planning. In contrast, government and business take preparation (planning) more seriously. Looking ahead, making sure things are ready and discerning the future are ministries that are needed both in the church and in the world.

Art and environment: Our liturgical celebrations require a space that is suitable and beautiful, with functional and dignified furnishings, and decoration that fits the liturgy and touches our affections. Artists, architects, designers and others minister to the liturgy through their creativity, sense of beauty, and appreciation of how to help us worship well.

Affirm creativity: In daily life we should affirm the ministry of all those whose creativity, sensitivity and skills show the beauty of God and the ingenuity of God's creation. All who promote beauty in any way, all who design and build worthy homes and building for business and government are carrying out worthwhile ministries. Those who show reverence for creation – seas, lakes and rivers, earth and sky, animals, fish and birds – are engaged in an important ministry.

Stewardship: Sacristans, janitors and instituted acolytes all in their own way take care of the house of the church. It is their responsibility and ministry to clean, maintain, repair, and keep an eye on things associated with the building, furniture and furnishings, vessels and vestments.

All who take care of things and places – and the created world, as already considered – carry out a service, though sometimes a humble, unrecognized and poorly rewarded one.

Building community: A major ministry of the assembly as it comes together is to build itself up into a visible and unified community rather than be just a collection of individuals. This is everyone’s responsibility. To aid the community in this respect, however, there are also particular ministers: ministers of hospitality, greeters, ushers. In addition to facilitating community building among the regular members of the local church, they also recognize guests and strangers, welcome them warmly and see to it that they are cared for and helped to participate in the celebration.
The presider also helps build community, for example by the greeting at the beginning of the celebration, the invitations to pray that he extends throughout the liturgy, in his preaching, and through the presidential prayers.

Community building in daily life has many dimensions. It can include helping families and households of all kinds, promoting unity and justice in neighborhoods, towns or cities, province and nation, the whole world. Introducing people who might not otherwise meet, bringing them together, increasing mutual understanding, and promoting unity, peace and justice in any way carries the liturgical ministry of community building into daily life.

Ministries of the Word

Assembly, readers, psalmist and preacher: During the liturgy of the word, the assembly exercises its ministry by attentive listening, by responding from the heart, and by making the message of the readings their own. Individual readers (lay and ordained) proclaim the three readings and the cantor leads the sung responses. The preacher interprets, challenges, comforts, encourages, provides new insights, and speaks prophetically.

Every dimension of the liturgical ministry of the word has its counterpart in daily life. We can minister through listening to others and by responding from the heart. We can proclaim the good news both in words of scripture and through music, literature, teaching, conversation and other forms of communication. We can help others to respond to what is happening in their lives, rather than remaining passive. We can help people see the presence and action of God in all of their lives.

Insight and encouragement: There is a daily-life ministry of interpretation and of giving new insight into events of our social and individual lives. Challenging, comforting, and encouraging all are important ministries.

Praying for others: The person who announces the intentions sets before us the needs of the Church, the world, those in need, and for the local community. This ministry models all kinds of caring for other persons during the week. In addition, it provides a pattern and inspiration for speaking on behalf of those in need who might otherwise remain voiceless and unrecognized and for bringing the needs of others to public view. Advocates, communications media and prophets of all kinds carry out this kind of ministry.

The collection: The assembly exercises its ministry by contributing towards the needs of the community; this is collected by the ushers. Raising money for worthy causes carries this ministry into the world, as does careful stewardship of community funds at all levels: family, school, parish and diocese, business, government. Making donations to those in need is an honorable ministry.

Gift bearers: Particular members of the assembly bear the gifts of bread and wine and money from the midst of the community to the table of the Lord. Before this can be done, of course, someone has to make and provide the bread and the wine.

Farmers and cooks: These liturgical ministries remind us of the important daily-life ministries of farmers and others who produce our food, those who process, distribute and sell food, cooks, vintners and others who create nutritious and savoury dishes for our sustenance and enjoyment.
All Christians are called to share food with those in need, whether directly or indirectly. So many are hungry, both locally and around the world; most of us have food to share with those less fortunate.

Love and wholeness: In addition, people are hungry for more than bodily nourishment. They also hunger for love, acceptance, good relationships with others, and wholeness. All Christians are called to feed people in these ways as well.

Music: Cantors, leaders of song and instrumentalists all provide leadership and individual gifts in the musical dimension of liturgy.

Music is a form of human creativity and good musical artists are to honored wherever they are to be found. Music often expresses joy and festivity, and some have a special ministry of joy and festivity in daily life. Music can express deep emotions and concepts in ways that are especially profound.

Leadership: Throughout the celebration the presider ministers through a leadership that enables the full participation of the entire community. The presider does not simply do certain things and say certain words, but also – even primarily – invites, introduces, and facilitates the ministry of the liturgical assembly as a whole and of its individual members. This is real leadership.

Leadership is important: In daily life there are many occasions for leadership, much need for good leadership, and diverse ways in which worthy leadership is and can be exercised. All who invite and encourage others to speak and act on their own behalf, all who facilitate and promote communities to act, those who lead governments, schools, business, groups of all kind, can carry the ministry of leadership into the world.

Deacons and acolytes carry out all kinds of service during the course of the liturgy. Carrying the cross, candles and book of the gospel, setting the table, giving directions, extending invitations, cleaning up, all fall to them.

Serving tables: Deacons and associated ministries are, from one perspective, table-servers: they wait on table. Thus they can be seen as models for those in daily life who prepare food, serve it, and clean up afterwards. Parents (especially mothers), those who work in restaurants, those who serve as food bank volunteers, persons who transport food and garbage, and others all embody this kind of diaconal ministry

Service to persons in any kind of need is another, broader, dimension of diaconal ministry. Those who care for other persons carry the liturgical ministry of deacons and acolytes into the world.

Reconciliation: In the “I confess” the whole assembly hears one another’s confession and asks one another to pray to God on their behalf; the presider then says a prayer of absolution. The baptismal and eucharistic liturgies as a whole are celebrations of reconciliation, as is the sacrament of penance.

Making peace: In daily life the ministry of reconciliation is carried out by all who make peace between persons, groups and nations; who heal bodies and especially minds and spirits; by those who speak encouraging words and give support.

Sick, dying, and bereaved: In the general intercessions the assembly as a whole prays for the sick, dying and bereaved. Ordained and lay ministers visit
the sick and dying, pray with them, and share holy communion. The assembly as well as particular parish ministers care for bereaved families and friends in the rites of Christian burial.

**Nurses, doctors**, hospital aides and other health care workers continue this ministry in society. Funeral directors, members of the community who help bereaved persons, those who look after widows and orphans, are also related to these liturgical ministries.

**Caring for children**: In the liturgy parents have a special ministerial role vis-à-vis their children both in the liturgy of baptism and in bringing up their children in the faith in the years that follow. Parents are also involved in preparing children for first eucharist and confirmation. Other ministries to children include godparents and those who take care of them during the liturgy of the word in the liturgy of baptism for children.

**Other liturgical ministries to children** include those who care for infants and small children so their parents can worship with less distraction, those who plan and lead childrens’ liturgies of the word, teachers who help children worship in schools, and all involved in catechesis and sacramental preparation.

**Child care and child rearing**: These liturgical ministries provide patterns and models for many ministries of child care and child rearing during the week. Parents continue to be important here, as do teachers, child care workers, those who care for the physical and mental health of children, those concerned with child nutrition and recreation, etc.

**Witness and catechesis**: Sponsors, godparents and catechists accompany and prepare candidates for adult initiation, and parents, godparents and catechists bring children up in the faith. This goes beyond simply teaching, as giving example in word and deed is especially important.

**Giving example**: In daily life there are all kind of needs and opportunities to give example for others, to witness to Christian values, and to preach through the way we live.
How Do We Relate to Other Persons?

Liturical celebrations, says the Second Vatican Council, "are not private functions, but celebrations belonging to the Church . . . . (They) involve the whole Body of the Church." Furthermore, whenever possible, "communal celebration involving the presence and active participation of the faithful . . . is to be preferred, as far as possible, to a celebration that is individual and, so to speak, private."

A pattern for human life: Our liturgies are experiences of relationships with other persons as well as of our relationship with God. When we worship we join together with others, we work and act with them, we listen and speak with them, we relate to them. Because liturgy is the source and font of the Christian life, it presents us with a pattern for all of human life, namely a life with other people, a life in which relationships with other persons are the norm. Our lives are not totally private, closed off from others.

Always connected: In our liturgical celebrations there is an ebb and flow between moments that stress our close relationship with others and moments when our individuality comes more to the fore. Sometimes we sing, speak, act and move all together; at other times, though surrounded by people, we are more by ourselves—the moments of silence, for example. So it is in our daily lives. Sometimes we are alone by ourselves, but even then we are never totally isolated. We have just come from being with other persons, or will soon be with others again.

Individuals-in-community: We can think of ourselves as "individuals-in-community;" sometimes we will emphasize the first part of this expression, sometimes the second.

All kinds of people: Liturgical celebrations, as acts of the whole church, invite and involve all kinds of people. This sets the pattern for our human relationships as well. Both are inclusive of women and men, children and older persons, lay and ordained persons, persons with physical and mental disabilities, rich and poor, highly educated and the illiterate, persons of varying cultures and languages. This variety is of the nature of humankind, it describes the church, and it is the experience of the liturgical assembly as well.

Worth and dignity: The relationships that we have with other persons in our liturgical celebrations is not necessarily close or intimate—but they are real human relationships nonetheless. Other persons are acknowledged as individuals, as persons of worth, as persons who deserve respect, as equals with regards to creation and baptism. We share a common human life with them and we care about them.

1 See the Constitution on the Liturgy, nn. 26-27

230
Individual differences: We also recognize that other persons are different than ourselves. Their distinctive personalities, talents and experiences are gifts from God and are to be acknowledged, received and rejoiced in.

Realistic: Finally, our relationships with others are realistic. We accept the imperfections and idiosyncrasies of other persons as we do our own. We confess, forgive, and are reconciled.

Many kinds of relationships: In our Sunday eucharistic celebrations we relate to other persons in a variety of ways, and these illustrate patterns of human relationships in our daily lives. Christian initiation and other liturgies illustrate other types of relationships.

Journeying

Gathering and going forth: Our liturgical celebrations include acts of gathering or assembling and of going forth or being sent out. At the beginning of the eucharistic liturgy there is the informal but deliberate movement of members of the community and their guests into the church building, followed by the formal procession of the presider and other ministers. At the conclusion of mass the presider and ministers process out, followed by the less formal movement of members of the community.

Processions: The eucharistic liturgy includes other processions as well: at the gospel, the procession of the gifts from the nave to the altar, and the communion procession in which the people go to feast at the table of the Lord and then return to their seats.

In the liturgy of baptism for children the parents, godparents and children come to the door of the church and are greeted there by the community. All then process from the door to the nave of the church for the word of God, from there to the font, then to the altar, and finally home again.

Active participation: These movements are intentional; they symbolize our journey of faith, not as individuals, but as members of the Body of Christ

Journeying with others: Throughout our whole lives we journey with other people: family, friends, fellow students, those with whom we work and with whom we enjoy recreation, fellow members of a religious community or collegium of presbyters. We do not isolate ourselves from persons around us but participate in our civil society and in our church communities. Our lives are not rootless or passive, but active and intentional – though not without their surprises and ups and downs.

Working

Acting in solidarity: Liturgical celebrations are actions, and they are actions of all those present. Full, active, conscious and fruitful participation of all because of their baptism is the basic principle of the contemporary liturgical renewal. In the liturgy we come together and work with others to celebrate; we act in soli-
darity with others and do not withdraw from the common action of the community. Acting — working — with others in this way is both a communal action and one in which the particular gifts and ministries of individuals are recognized.

Working with others: Our life is characterized by working together with others as well. Work for the common good is an honorable thing; it is a way of participating in God's creative actions in the world, and it contributes to a wholistic way of living.

Gathering

At the beginning of each liturgy we gather together to form and manifest the local church community. At the Sunday eucharist our gathering involves a number of separate actions, all of which collectively build up community and promote unity. In addition, they allow us to name ourselves, to say who we are as God's people. Finally, gathering is a sign of being called by God. The diversity of people is a sign of the universality of God's call. Each assembly expresses the call of God and its universality.

Gathering together with other persons is one of the most basic forms of human relationship. Whether in households, at work or play, for service, education or at other times, we join with others for company and in common endeavor.

Human gathering generally is a process in which we participate actively; less commonly are we passive. We form various kinds of human community by coming together physically, by greeting each other, by engaging in a common purpose, by being of one mind (at least in certain respects). Often these gatherings will include a wide variety of people, though sometimes they will be less inclusive in nature.

Hospitality: When we gather for the liturgy, one of the first things we do is exercise hospitality toward strangers and guests, as well as toward other members of the local church community. Hospitality is a form of human relationship that is closely related to gathering. We acknowledge other persons in a welcoming manner, respect their individuality, invite them in and help them to participate: we care about them. We exercise such hospitality in our homes, schools, work and recreational situations, whenever we meet someone new, whenever we encounter someone who is isolated or in need.

Confession: The gathering rites of the liturgy may include a prayer of confession followed by an absolution. In our daily human relationships we are aware of our mutual mistakes and imperfections. We say, "I'm sorry", "I didn't understand", "I'll try again". We also encourage each other, forgive, forget, have compassion, and depend on each other even in our fragility.

Naming ourselves: In gathering for worship we implicitly say who we are. Through our actions and prayers, for example, we say that we are called here by God, we are sons and daughters of God and sisters and brothers of Jesus Christ, we are baptized, we are sinners, we are redeemed. Naming ourselves and telling others who we are is another basic way in which we relate to other persons. We are individuals, we have our own individual identities, we are members of certain communities, we have distinct personalities and gifts. These and other aspects of our lives we communicate through our names.
Going forth

At the end of our liturgical celebrations we share God's blessing and then are sent forth to live the meaning of the liturgy in our daily lives. We do not just drift away, as we might after a movie or a sports event. We are blessed and sent; we go purposely and deliberately to the other dimensions of our lives. The conclusion of each liturgy is also a new beginning; we accept a shared task of being good news in the world, and we go forth actively with joy and praise.

Our life with other persons is full of endings and new beginnings, with the acceptance of responsibility for living purposeful lives and contributing to the well being of other persons and society.

The blessing and dismissal ("Go in peace") at the end of our liturgies are acts of encouragement, empowerment and dedication. Encouraging others and empowering them to live well and to work with dedication are important modes of human relationship.

When a deacon is present, it is his role to send the people out at the conclusion of the celebration. He symbolically represents the servant nature of the church community, and his involvement here is one more indication that we are sent forth to continue the ministry of the church and the ministry of Jesus Christ in the world around us during the week that is to follow. Every day we go forth to serve the world in the name of Jesus Christ; every time we put on our shoes we are equipping ourselves not just to live for ourselves but to live for others.

Sharing Stories

In the liturgy of the word we retell the great stories of God with humankind. We then respond, interpret and apply these stories to ourselves, and we respond again. Our presidential prayers are stories as well. We tell of God's marvelous deeds with humankind and how women and men responded – or failed to do so. We speak of our needs and our dreams, our fears and our hopes.

Sharing stories like this is a fundamental way in which to experience human relationships. We tell others about significant moments in our personal and communal lives, whether it is what happened today at school, at work, at play, at home, or whether it is something that happened some time ago. We tell the stories, and we then interpret and apply them; we make connections between what happened in the past, what is happening now, and the future.

We listen to other people's stories, even if we have heard them before. We share in them, accept them as gifts, allow them to challenge or comfort us, let ourselves be moved and empowered by them, see ourselves in new ways because of them.

We also respond and react to the stories we tell. We affirm, applaud, commiserate, react with praise, thanksgiving, sorrow. We may be moved to laughter or to tears, or to some concrete action.
Sharing Nourishment

In our Sunday eucharist we celebrate a ritual meal and share holy communion. The table is set and the gifts are brought; a great prayer of thanksgiving is proclaimed; we then eat the bread which is Christ's body and drink the wine which is Christ's blood.

Eating and drinking with others are very basic experiences of human relationships. We acknowledge that the food and drink on our tables would not be there if not for the work and creativity of many other persons: farmers, vintners, processors and distributors, grocers, cooks. We acknowledge that our food and drink are gifts from a loving God.

Our deeper hungers: Eating and drinking are experiences in which we acknowledge our biological hungers. They are also experiences which are symbolic of our deeper hungers. We hunger for wholeness, for healing, for love as well as for a full stomach. In eating and drinking with other persons these deeper dimensions of hunger may be fulfilled, at least in part, through the sharing of stories, concern, humanity and caring that social interactions include.

A hungry feast: When we eat and drink in our liturgy, we eat only a bite and drink only a sip; it is a “hungry feast.” We thereby stand in solidarity with those who go hungry, with those who never have much more than a bite and a sip – and there are many such persons in our world today.

Sharing equally: In our liturgy we all eat and drink almost the same amount of bread and wine. No one grabs all the food, leaving others with less. No one gets more because of rank, social status, money, beauty, fame or education; these do not count when it comes to the eucharistic meal. What does count is that we are created children of God, baptized sisters and brothers of Jesus Christ, temples of the Holy Spirit. At Christ's table, all are equal.

Working for a better world: This equality in sharing the eucharistic food and drink shows us that equality in sharing all nourishment should be the case in society. Obviously, we have not yet achieved this goal, and hence are called to work for a better world in which no one will go hungry.

Eucharist means “thanksgiving,” and praise and thanksgiving are primary notes of our Sunday liturgy. Every meal should be a thankful one; every meal calls for a grace; each meal should evoke a thankful way of life.

The Holy Spirit: Our eucharistic meal involves the transformation of ordinary bread and wine into the sacramental body and blood of Christ; for this we invoke the presence and action of the Holy Spirit. We also ask the Holy Spirit to transform us, the people who share holy communion, so that we can live in ways that bring good news to the whole world.

Transformation is part of any act of eating and drinking. The food and drink are digested and absorbed and they then become part of our bodies through the processes of metabolism. Our bodies are transformed through the incorporation and metabolism of our food. Eating and drinking are part of our growing up, development, maturing, and growing old.

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This message is enforced when the people are allowed to share from the cup.
Toward better relationships: Transformation is also part of human relationships. Our sensitivity to others, our care for others, our ability to communicate with other persons — these and other dimensions of human life should continually be growing.

God’s reign: Our eucharistic meal, in part, looks beyond the present moment to the future, when we will celebrate the banquet of God’s reign that is promised us in scripture. All eating and drinking is a preparation for the future; we are strengthened, enlivened, nourished for life tomorrow. And the tomorrows of this life look forward to the tomorrow that will follow our death.

More open to others: When we eat and drink with others we generally are more relaxed and open to communication and relationship with other persons than may be the case at other times. We may be more vulnerable, more frank, more willing to share of ourselves.

Solidarity: Finally, eating and drinking with others are acts of solidarity with them. It is a unifying action, bonding people together.

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Touching

Gentle and caring: In our liturgical celebrations we touch other persons with gentleness and caring. We may shake hands as a gesture of hospitality, we share a sign of peace — a handshake, hug or kiss. We touch catechumens and children about to be baptized with the sign of the cross. We touch to anoint and to immerse. Bishops and priests lay hands on the sick and those to be confirmed or ordained. Bride and groom join hands.

Touching is an important nonverbal expression of human relationship. Gentleness, caring, love, respect, greeting — these and other meanings are expressed by touching. In an age and society in which there is so much physical violence against persons, touching gently is indeed a gift. The way in which we touch others in our liturgies is a good pattern for our physical contact with others in our daily lives.

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Bringing into Community

The liturgies of Christian initiation also provide patterns and models of human relationship. In many ways they resemble those of the eucharistic liturgy, for example, hospitality, journeying, and sharing stories.

Building community: The special pattern shown in Christian initiation may be termed “bringing into community” those who are not yet our sisters and brothers through baptism. The catechumenate, starting with the rite of acceptance, is a long period in which persons outside the community of the church walk with church members in order to learn how Christians live. Conversely, the church members are walking with the catechumens on their personal journey of conversion. Catechumens learn how Christians pray, think, act morally and live ministerially. They learn what is of the one true God and what is not.

235
In the sacraments of initiation, women and men enter the community through water and the Holy Spirit and through the eucharistic meal. They become adopted sisters and brothers of Jesus Christ and therefore our sisters and brothers as well. They are anointed to be priest, prophet and king. They enter into the body of Christ which is the church.

In our human society – at local, regional, national and international levels – many are left out, many are marginalized, many are refugees or outcasts, many are never accepted. Immigrants and refugees, native peoples, persons who are economically poor, those with little or no education, men and women without work, those who have no voice in society – these and others cry out to enter into the various dimensions of human society.

Working for a more inclusive society: The pattern of human relationship shown in the liturgies of Christian initiation calls us to work for a society in which all are really full members and in which all persons are accepted and valued.
What Is Our Relationship With Creation?

The liturgies of the church express and model our relationship with creation as well as our relationship with God and with other persons. We name and celebrate God as creator of all things and Jesus Christ as liberator of creation as well as of humankind. We proclaim that the Holy Spirit has breathed upon creation, endowing it with goodness. We may recall the following liturgical texts:

God as Creator

**In baptism and each Sunday's eucharist** we profess our faith by proclaiming:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.¹

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.²

**In the preparation of the altar and gifts** we say:

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made.

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and work of human hands.³

**When we bless water** for sprinkling at the beginning of the eucharist we say:

God our Father, your gift of water brings life and freshness to the earth . . . .

Hear our prayers and bless this water which gives fruitfulness to the fields, and refreshment and cleansing to [us].⁴

¹ Apostles' Creed
² Nicene Creed
³ Order of Mass, Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts
⁴ Order of Mass, Blessing and Sprinkling Holy Water
In the prayers over water at baptism we refer to “your gift of water,”5 and say:

At the very dawn of creation
your Spirit breathed on the waters.6

Praise to you, almighty God and Father,
for you have created water to cleanse
and to give life.7

Blessed oils: We acknowledge God as creator as well when the oils used in baptism, confirmation, ordination and anointing of the sick are blessed:

God our maker,
source of all growth in holiness . . . .

In the beginning, at your command,
the earth produced fruit-bearing trees.
From the fruit of the olive tree
you have provided us with oil for holy chrism.

And so, Father, we ask you to bless this oil
you have created.8

Several prefaces speak of creation and of God as creator:

All things are of your making,
all times and seasons obey your laws,
but you chose to create [humankind] in your own image,
setting [us] over the whole world in all its wonder.
You made [humankind] the steward of creation,
to praise you day by day
for the marvels of your wisdom and power.9

Through your beloved Son
you created our human family.
Through him you restored us to your likeness.
Therefore it is your right
to receive the obedience of all creation,
the praise of the Church on earth,
the thanksgiving of your saints in heaven.10

In the preface to Eucharistic Prayer 2 we say,

He is the Word through whom you made the universe.

Finally, in Eucharistic Prayer 3 we pray:

Father, you are holy indeed,
and all creation rightly gives you praise.

5 RCIA, Rite of Baptism for Children: Prayer over the Water 1
6 Ibid.
7 RCIA, Rite of Baptism for Children: Prayer over the Water 2
8 Blessing of Oils
9 Preface, Sundays of Ordinary Time 5
10 Preface, Weekdays 3
God has created all, and God “saw that it was good.” God values creation in its own right; its value is not related to its usefulness to humanity. Furthermore, God has a loving relationship with the rest of creation as well as with humankind. How can we abuse creation if this is the case? Finally, modern science shows us that God’s design of creation is beyond our comprehension and encompasses much more than us human beings.

Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit: Scripture and liturgical texts also show that Jesus Christ – the eternal word – was involved in creation as well as redemptive recreation: “[Christ] is the Word through whom you [God] made the universe.” Christ’s liberating and redeeming death and resurrection has consequences for creation as well as for ourselves. Finally, creation has been infused in a certain way by the Holy Spirit.

Humankind in Creation

We ourselves are created by God; we are part of creation. We grow, we may marry, we may generate life ourselves, we become sick and die. We have a unique status within creation, but that does not mean that we own or are allowed to abuse the rest of creation; we remain in close relationship with it.

We are created as embodied persons, not pure spirits. Our liturgies show that we touch, hear, see and smell; we use our bodies in posture, gesture and movement; we come and go, make the sign of the cross, are sprinkled with water, we eat and drink, bathe and anoint, lay on hands and exchange the sign of peace, greet one another.

We live in and with creation. Our liturgical celebrations show that we use the materials of creation – as well as human creativity and artistry – to build our churches as well as our homes. We use natural materials to create art and decoration and show that what God has created is good and beautiful.

We worship sacramentally, using created things – water, bread and wine, oil – and human actions to communicate the sacred. We worship in time, an element of creation. The past, the present and the future are important elements of creation, and we always have a great concern for the future.

The whole topic of liturgy and creation needs further reflection and expression.
The meetings of many liturgy commissions (and committees) begin with "The meeting will come to order;" they conclude with "This meeting is adjourned." Business is conducted according to "parliamentary procedure," with motions made, seconded and voted upon. The agenda is ordered in a traditional way; for example, approval of minutes, correspondence, financial report, old business, new business, committee reports.

This model of meetings is given us by government, business, unions, fraternal organizations — and it may suit them well. There are tasks to perform and goals to achieve. The people are present to do the work and accept responsibilities. In practice, such meetings may accomplish much or little; they may be enjoyable or boring, satisfying or frustrating. This type of meeting is well known to almost everyone.

Something new: Put this kind of meeting aside for a moment. Instead, conjure up in your imagination a quite different view of a liturgy commission meeting.

• The presider (formerly the chairperson) begins by looking at each member present and saying:
  The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God
  and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

• And the participants (members) respond:
  And also with you.

• Two or three hours later, at the end of the meeting, the presider says:
  Go now in the peace of Christ.

• And the members respond:
  Thanks be to God.

Prayer and study are included in the meeting as well as "business." There are few if any motions or votes, but much coming to consensus. The agenda orders items in terms of their importance or urgency.

A Liturgical Model

The inspiration for the second kind of commission meeting is that of the local church gathered at worship. How appropriate for a liturgy commission, composed of members who worship regularly and whose responsibility it is to care about the worship of the entire diocesan (or parish) church! (The opening and
closing dialogues above are given for the sake of making this point; in practice it is not necessary to use them.)

Church: In this view the liturgy commission is a manifestation of the church; it is not the whole church, and certainly not a complete local church, but it nevertheless has some characteristics of church. It must worship, it must learn, teach and witness; above all it must serve others. It is composed of baptized, faithful, spirit-gifted people who share in the priestly, prophetic and pastoral servant-ministry of Jesus Christ. It will model, proclaim and be a foretaste of the reign of God.

Purpose: To view the liturgy commission meeting as inspired by the church at worship is not to neglect its overall purpose and specific tasks. The church as a whole has a purpose: to serve the reign of God is one way of describing it; giving glory to God and saving humanity is another. It has myriad specific tasks. The liturgy commission exists to give advice, educate, provide information, plan special liturgies, etc. It provides leadership and serves the wider church in doing so.

Community: Yet, like the church as a whole, the purpose of the liturgy commission is achieved not only by going to those outside of itself, but also by building itself up as a community. This means that the people who are its members become very important, both individually and collectively. The commission members are not there just to do the work of the commission; the "people-dimension" of the commission meeting should not receive any less attention than the "business-dimension."

Members are baptized sisters and brothers in Jesus Christ, living in the Holy Spirit. All have been given gifts of the Spirit for ministry and have been called by God to exercise these in and through the commission. Service on the liturgy commission becomes an opportunity to use one’s gifts, to experience “church” in a specific way, and to develop as mature Christians.

When the church at worship is its model, liturgy commission meetings will adhere to the basic principles of the contemporary liturgical renewal:

All the faithful should be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy, and to which the Christian people . . . have a right and obligation by reason of their baptism.¹

Pastors of souls must . . . realize that, when the liturgy is celebrated, something more is required than the laws governing valid and lawful celebration. It is their duty also to ensure that the faithful take part fully aware of what they are doing, actively engaged in the rite, and enriched by it.²

Presence of Christ: When inspired by the church at worship, liturgy commission meetings will also be experiences of the presence of Christ; he has promised to be with his disciples when they gather in his name. The meetings will be experiences of the shared ministry of all present, and of the ministry of the gathered community as a whole. There will be full and fruitful participation,

¹ Constitution on the Liturgy, no 14
² Constitution on the Liturgy, no 11
which will be meaningful and satisfying; the meetings will be good human experiences. They also derive from and lead to the Sunday eucharist(s) of the entire diocese (or parish).

**Servant-leader:** The presider (chairperson) has a central role of servant leadership, one that goes well beyond that of seeing that the work gets done. He or she needs also to build up the community and to care for its individual members. Discerning, fostering and coordinating the distinct gifts of individuals becomes an important responsibility. Listening to and just being with the members may become as important as pushing the agenda through.

**Planning:** As with the Sunday liturgy, planning the gathering is an important responsibility of the presider and a few others — the executive. The planning process may be guided by the following principles (making the necessary changes in language):

> The pastoral effectiveness of a celebration will be heightened if the texts . . . correspond as closely as possible to the needs, religious dispositions, and aptitudes of the participants. In planning the celebration, then, the priest should consider the general spiritual good of the assembly rather than his personal outlook. He should be mindful that the choice of texts is to be made in consultation with the ministers and others who have a function in the celebration . . . .

**Gathering:** The commission meeting will begin with a kind of gathering rite, in which the members are hospitably greeted by the presider or by another person acting as greeter; the members also greet each other. The initial part of the meeting will serve to gather the individual members into a community, united in order to carry out its task.

**Conclusion:** At the end of the meeting the commission will look to the future: to its next meeting, to the responsibilities of individual members on behalf of the commission between this meeting and the next, to their own daily lives. They are sent forth by the presider with a commission and a blessing; they are sent forth in the peace of Jesus Christ — and are thankful to God for this opportunity to serve.

The body of the meeting may be thought of as being inspired by the liturgy of the word, whose dynamic is similar to proclamation and response. Proclamation includes reports, study, correspondence, presentations; response includes discussion, discernment, decisions, and planning.

**Prayer and refreshment:** There will be formal worship, often morning prayer/evening prayer. From time to time the commission ought prayerfully to share food together: a dinner, party, or simply coffee, juice and cookies.

**Planning and Process**

The challenge of a commission meeting is to conduct the needed business and build up the community and its members, all in a limited period of time. There is never enough time. Meetings cannot be too frequent and they should not last too long. It is an important role of the presider to try to balance the carrying out of the commission’s responsibilities with the time available.

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3 General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no 313
Before the meeting, the chairperson and other members of the executive will list everything that needs to go on the agenda and make a preliminary assessment of their relative importance. The agenda items also need to be organized according to type (genre):

- matters requiring decisions to be made (new or carried over)
- matters that simply need to be provided for information
- reports of committees
- commission projects (new, continuing, completed)
- finances, correspondence, other business matters
- personnel needs and concerns
- miscellaneous items.

Some information items can simply be put on newsprint or typed up. These might include routine financial reports, ongoing or forthcoming activities and persons involved, dates and events. Members can simply look at these, and though there should be an opportunity to ask pertinent questions, they are not discussed. Routine correspondence might also be reported in this way.

Managing time: More important agenda items need to be listed, again on newsprint or typed out. A form might be set up with the following headings: agenda item, order on the agenda, why it is included, how it is to be handled, by whom, resources required, action taken. Management of time may be aided by dividing the meeting into 15-minute portions; a 2 1/2 hour meeting will have 10 such portions.

Greeting and prayer: As members gather they will be greeted; members can take turns being greeter. Meetings may begin with a brief liturgy (for example, some form of liturgy of the hours) or this may come at the conclusion; in the latter case there will still be a brief prayer at the beginning.

At the beginning: Two other activities may initiate commission meetings and serve to gather everyone together as community; these also allow latecomers to arrive and get settled. First, a few members can be asked briefly to share some personal experience of liturgy — either a good one or a poor one; in addition to describing it, they might share their feelings about it.

Setting priorities: Second, members can be asked to set priorities for the meeting. They will look at the various important agenda items that the executive has listed, make sure that they know what each is about, and rank them in order of importance; that will be the order with which they are dealt. They may also wish to estimate the amount of time (minutes) they think ought to be spent on each item. An opportunity is also given for members to add new business items to the agenda. Instead of putting these at the end of the meeting, they should be ranked along with the other items.

Energy: It is well to place items that require fresh energy early on the agenda; routine items or those that might involve long discussion are often scheduled for later. It is also well to plan short breaks at regular intervals, and to provide simple refreshments.

Committee reports might be included under important business, or as information items. Each major committee ought to be given time once or twice
during the year to describe its work, concerns and membership in some detail. At other meetings it may only provide a brief written or oral report, unless one of its projects is on the agenda.

New projects: When new projects are planned, it is important not only to grasp their overall goal, scope and outline, but also to go through them step by step in as much detail as possible. What exactly is required in terms of time, place, personnel and other resources? What exactly is required of commission members in order to complete the project? Members are more apt to undertake responsibilities for the tasks involved if they can see what specific tasks are involved; otherwise they might feel overwhelmed.

Facilitating Full Participation

Like a liturgical presider, the commission chairperson needs to facilitate the full, active and conscious participation of all the members. This can be done in a number of ways.

If some members are not taking part, the presider may address questions to them or specifically ask them their views. The presider ought to be generous in giving credit to those doing certain tasks and in giving thanks for the work and reports of committees.

Sharing leadership: Leadership of the meeting could be shared. The presider could ask others to lead this or that part of the meeting, or could ask different members to introduce issues or provide background for a discussion; this needs to be organized ahead of time. Sharing leadership can be seen as training future leaders of the group as well as respecting the gifts of individual members.

Five roles: Leon McKenzie makes the following suggestions for facilitating participation and productivity in meetings such as those of a liturgy commission. He describes five roles: those of builder, gatekeeper, harmonizer, encourager, and clarifier. These become the responsibility not only of the presider but also of other members, according to their gifts.

The builder: In a problem-solving group, it is necessary to maintain continuity and relationship among the ideas expressed by the members of the group. One of the ways of maintaining this continuity is by building upon the ideas of others.

When a member of the group says something, it is ordinarily productive for another member to "connect" what he/she says to what has been stated. Someone may contribute a particular approach to a given problem; the builder will accept this contribution and explore its ramifications. When members of a group build upon the ideas of one another, problem solving becomes easier and tasks are accomplished more efficiently.

The gatekeeper: At every meeting there may be one or two persons who are retiring, timid, or reticent about jumping into the discussion. At times these people give little non-verbal signals (throat clearing, hand raising, etc.) which indicate they would like to participate in the discussion.

* "How to behave (and not behave) at parish meetings," Today's Parish (November-December 1974) 25-30; reprinted in Liturgy 70 (vol 7, no 7)
The function of the gatekeeper is to be sensitive to others who may want to speak and to invite these persons into the discussion. The gatekeeper will also keep track of persons who are interrupted and will ask them, at an appropriate time, to continue to speak at the point they were interrupted.

**The harmonizer:** It is not unusual in every group that conflict may be present. It is the task of the harmonizer to smooth over this conflict. The harmonizer may settle emotional conflict by interjecting humor into the discussion, by remaining calm and placid in times of stress, and by smiling a lot.

**The encourager** functions to make people feel good about their participation in the problem solving team. He/she also helps ameliorate potential personality conflicts in the group.

When ideas offered by the group members appear to be in conflict, the harmonizer tries to show the compatibility of different points of view. He/she is the mediator of any disagreements that may occur. He/she is a peacemaker and compromiser.

**The clarifier:** One of the reasons why communication falters in groups is due to the fact that there is a difference between what is said and what is heard. The clarifier functions to minimize message distortion in a group. When someone says something that is particularly involved or complicated, the clarifier will repeat back the message to determine if the message has been properly received by group members.

**Consensus:** During the meeting, decisions will as much as possible be made by consensus rather than by voting. (Parliamentary procedure, motions and voting did not come down from heaven; they are not even necessarily Christian.) Each person should be encouraged, and if necessary, asked directly, what they think about the matter at hand; pros and cons will be discussed back and forth. A consensus does not mean that there is unanimous agreement, but that most of those present feel comfortable with a certain course of action. Everyone must be able to voice their position and be heard with respect by everyone else, though in the end some may not agree with the decision that is taken.

**At the end of the meeting,** the time, place, and major concerns of the next meeting can be named. There might be a brief evaluation – oral or written – of the meeting just completed. Each member could say what was most satisfying and least satisfying, most and least interesting, and make suggestions for improvement. Each might also say how he or she did or did not contribute to the various aspects of the meeting, and what might be done to facilitate his or her greater participation.

**Visioning:** Finally, there might be a time of dreaming or envisioning: saying “What if . . .” or “I dream of the day when . . . .” There should be no expectations that commission members have to take on their visions as projects here and now; it is a time to let imaginations fly freely. Occasionally, there ought to be time to list long-term goals of the commission; here the commitment of the members should be asked for.

**Are your liturgy commission meetings** inspired by the church at worship? Why not try it this year?
Differences between the Eucharist and Liturgies of the Word with Holy Communion

Because of the shortage of priests, more and more parishes are unable to celebrate the eucharist every Sunday. Increasingly, therefore, the main parish liturgy on Sunday may be a liturgy of the word, or a liturgy of the word with holy communion. The first two kinds of service might also include a prayer of thanksgiving and praise. Liturgies of the word and liturgies of the word with holy communion, as well as the liturgy of the hours, which include the Sunday readings, are officially sanctioned for Sunday worship when no priest is present.¹

The tradition of the Church: It should be understood that the celebration of the eucharist remains the proper way of celebrating Sunday. Since the day of Pentecost, the Church has always faithfully come together to celebrate the paschal mystery on the "first day of the week" that is, on Sunday. This is best celebrated in the eucharist, but when real circumstances make this impossible, as has often happened throughout the history of the Church, either in times of persecution or evangelization, or when there is a shortage of priests, it is important that Sunday remain the day for the local Church – the assembly of the faithful – to gather to hear the Word of God and to pray together. This gathering of the people of God continues and preserves the Christian tradition regarding Sunday.

Today many are asking, "Do Catholics know the difference between the eucharist and the liturgies used on Sunday when the eucharist cannot be celebrated?"

Liturgies of the word and the liturgy of the hours are clearly different than the mass, and are not considered in this article.

Liturgies of the word with holy communion, however, invite further reflection. Some fear that Catholics may confuse or equate such liturgies with the mass, consider the distinctions between them to be of minor significance, or value the one almost as highly as the other.

Some fear that eucharistic communion might become the most important aspect of liturgies of the word with holy communion to the detriment of other

parts; or that both parts of these liturgies – word, communion – will come to be perceived as more important than the eucharistic prayer.

**Multiple modes of Christ's presence:** Along similar lines, some fear that an overemphasis on the communion rite might lead to such a focus on Christ's presence in the eucharistic bread and wine that too little attention will be given to Christ's presence in the assembly, word of God, and ordained minister.

**What are the differences?** Whether or not such fears are justified, it is important to understand the theological and liturgical differences between mass and liturgies of the word with holy communion. This article considers these differences, and is especially addressed to priests and other pastoral ministers who have to discuss this matter with their communities.

**Terminology**

**Not the eucharist:** Careful attention needs to be given to the names given to the various liturgies celebrated on Sunday. Liturgies of the word with holy communion are “eucharistic” in that they include the sharing of the eucharistic body and blood of Christ in the consecrated bread. However, they cannot be called “the eucharist,” a term which is synonymous with the mass; “the eucharistic celebration” and “the celebration of the eucharist” also refer to the mass.

**No partial eucharist:** We may be tempted to use language like “the celebration of the eucharist as a whole,” “the eucharist itself,” or “the entire – or real – mass (eucharist)” to refer to the celebration of the eucharist in contrast to the celebration of the word with holy communion. These phrases are incorrect, however, if they are used to imply that there can be some kind of partial or incomplete celebration of the eucharist. This is not possible. A liturgy is either the eucharist (or mass) or it is not. It is either the eucharist (mass) or it is some other kind of service which is not and cannot be the eucharist (mass).

**Not communion services:** Finally, it is an oversimplification to call liturgies of the word with holy communion simply “communion services.” This phrase underrates the word of God that is proclaimed, preached and responded to in these liturgies and undervalues the gathering of God’s people.

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**What is Missing?**

**What is missing** when we celebrate a liturgy of the word with holy communion instead of the eucharist (mass)? At the deepest level, the answer is very simple: the eucharist.

**To celebrate the eucharist,** there must be a eucharistic prayer. And to pray the eucharistic prayer there must be an ordained presbyter or bishop together with the people of the local church.

**It is incorrect** to think – if anyone actually does – that the eucharistic prayer is “the priest's part” of the mass, and that the communion rite is “the people's part” of the mass.

**Doing eucharist:** In the eucharistic prayer the priest and the people together “do” eucharist, that is they carry out the action of the eucharist. Subsequently, in holy communion, the priest and the people together share in the body and blood of Christ, the sacramental fruits of doing the eucharist.
Thus a primary problem that arises when no priest is present is that the people do not have their rightful opportunity to do the eucharist—to carry out the eucharistic action: of giving thanks; offering; breaking the bread. Without this action of the priest and the people, there is no eucharist.

A secondary problem is that without the eucharistic prayer and action, the bread and wine are not consecrated for holy communion. Rather communion takes place by using hosts consecrated at a previous celebration of the eucharist.

Cannot replace the eucharistic prayer: Neither full participation in the liturgy of the word of God, nor full participation in the communion rite—precious as both are—can replace the action that is the eucharistic prayer.

Action of the people: For a variety of reasons, the important role of the people assembling and praying the eucharistic prayer—and hence in doing eucharist—is neither as well understood nor experienced as deeply as it should be. This topic will be considered at greater length in the next issue of the Bulletin.

Gabe Huck has recently summed this up by writing:

The eucharist is something baptized people do—not watch, but do. And...the shape of this is that of a beautifully worded prayer that is entrusted to the ordained presbyter, often sung, and always acclaimed by the entire assembly.

Eucharist isn't something we distribute and receive, it is something that we do. It's a noun that names the verbs involved in lifting hearts and giving God thanks and praise. This eucharist is the Sunday work of presider-led assembly that gives us the pattern for being.²

Another Perspective

What has been said above makes it clear that in the absence of the eucharistic prayer it is not simply a part of the mass that is missing; because of this there is no eucharist at all.

Parts of the mass: However, it is also possible to approach the question, What is missing? from the point of view of the individual parts of the eucharistic liturgy.

Thus we may ask:

• How is the communion rite itself different in a liturgy of the word with holy communion than in the mass?

• What specific theological perspectives are lost, weakened or altered when the preparation of the altar and gifts and the eucharistic prayer are omitted?

The Communion Rite

Not the same: Because both the eucharist and liturgies of the word plus holy communion contain a "communion rite," we may be tempted to think that the two communion rites are identical. That is not the case.

² Gabe Huck, “Eucharist as deed,” Liturgy 90 (February-March 1990) 12-13

248
Communion from the cup is not possible in a liturgy of the word plus holy communion. Though consecrated wine is permitted for communion to the sick, it is not usually reserved. Yet “it is most desirable that . . . in the instances when it is permitted (the faithful) share in the chalice.” In Canada communion from the cup at the Sunday eucharist is encouraged.

Wafer-like hosts will probably be used, and these generally do not meet the standards officially set out for altar breads. In addition to being wheaten, unleavened, and baked in the traditional shape, “the nature of the sign demands that the material for the eucharistic celebration truly have the appearance of food.” Bread that really looks like food will most probably not be used because it is not so easily reserved.

No fraction rite: Communion from hosts consecrated at a previous liturgy means that there can be no real breaking of the bread (fraction rite). Yet this is a significant part of the eucharistic celebration: “In apostolic times this gesture of Christ at the last supper gave the entire eucharistic action its name. This rite is not simply functional, but is a sign that in sharing the one bread of life which is Christ we who are many are made one body . . . .” Likewise, “the eucharistic bread should be made in such a way that in a Mass with a congregation the priest is able actually to break the host into parts and distribute them to at least some of the faithful.”

Hosts consecrated previously: Obviously, the people cannot receive hosts consecrated at the same liturgy. Yet “it is most desirable that the faithful receive the Lord’s body from hosts consecrated at the same Mass . . . . Then even through the signs communion will stand out most clearly as a sharing in the sacrifice actually being celebrated.”

Distribution or sharing? Communion appears to be more the distribution of food from the tabernacle than the sharing of food from the Lord’s table. The altar is less like a real meal table.

Some of the prayers after communion found in the sacramentary will be inappropriate or misinterpreted if used at liturgies of the word plus holy communion. They are not prayers of thanksgiving after receiving Christ’s body and blood. Instead, “the priest petitions for the effects of the mystery just celebrated,” that is, the mass or eucharistic celebration. Though some of the Sunday prayers after communion do refer explicitly to holy communion, in many of them the terms “eucharist,” “sacrament” and “mystery” refer to the mass as a whole.

The sign of peace has its roots in the eucharistic prayer, and this connection is lost in liturgies of the word plus holy communion. It recalls the petition of the second epiclesis, “make us grow in love,” “strengthen in faith and love your

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3 Pastoral Care. Rites of Anointing and Viaticum 74, 181
4 General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) 56h
5 GIRM 282, 283
6 GIRM 283
7 GIRM 56c
8 GIRM 283
9 GIRM 56h
10 GIRM 56k
11 Eucharistic Prayer 2
pilgrim Church," and "gather all who share this bread and wine into the one body of Christ." We remember also, "Lord, may this sacrifice which has made our peace with you, advance the peace and salvation of all the world."

Preparation of the Altar and Gifts

This part of the eucharistic liturgy is less important than many other parts of the mass, and need not be overemphasized. Nevertheless, its absence in liturgies of the word with holy communion does have several consequences that may be noted.

As there is no procession of the gifts, the idea that the bread and wine come from the people is not explicitly demonstrated. Yet "it is desirable for the faithful to present the bread and wine . . . . Even though the faithful no longer, as in the past, bring the bread and wine for the liturgy from their homes, the rite of carrying up the gifts retains the same spiritual value and meaning." The ministry of gift bearer is eliminated as well.

The collection is not related primarily to the liturgy of the word. This is not bad in itself, but its normal relationship to the liturgy of the eucharist is lost.

Creation and human labor: The idea that the bread and wine are God's gifts through creation is not explicitly referred to: "Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread (wine) to offer." Neither is the idea that they are also the work of human creativity and labor: "which earth has given and human hands have made . . . (fruit of the vine and work of human hands)."

The preparation of the gifts and the communion rite, though separated by the eucharistic prayer, are connected in the overall dynamic of the mass. In the preparation rite the people of God bring gifts of bread and wine to the Lord's table. These are already God's gift to them through nature and human labor. After prayer and the action of the Holy Spirit, the people of God in the communion rite receive back these gifts, now transformed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ broken and poured out for us and for all people. This dynamic of giving and receiving back is an important aspect of the eucharistic action that is lost.

Eucharistic Prayer

Prayers of thanksgiving and praise that may be included in liturgies of the word with holy communion cannot take the place of the eucharistic prayer. They lack the essential elements of epiclesis, institution, anamnesis and offering. They may or may not refer to God's great deeds in creation and the history of salvation, and may or may not point to the future or to our waiting for Christ's final coming. They still have merit but need to be understood independently from the eucharistic prayer.

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12 Eucharistic Prayer 3
13 Eucharistic Prayer 4
14 Eucharistic Prayer 3
15 GIRM 49
16 Order of Mass: Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts
The Trinity and the Holy Spirit

The eucharistic prayer is explicitly trinitarian: to God the Father, through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit. In contrast, the communion rite is predominantly christological. The sign of peace is addressed to the "Lord Jesus Christ," the breaking of bread is accompanied by the "Lamb of God," and we receive "the body of Christ" and "the blood of Christ." Of course the Lord's Prayer is addressed to the Father, as is the prayer after communion. However, a fully trinitarian orientation is lost if there is no eucharistic prayer.

Holy Spirit: In the eucharistic prayer the entire assembly - priest and people - prays to God to send the Holy Spirit to transform the bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ to be our saving food. For example, "Let your Spirit come upon these gifts to make them holy, so that they may become for us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ." In liturgies of the word plus holy communion this role of the Holy Spirit is not referred to.

Unity of God's people: In addition, in the eucharistic prayer all pray to God to send the Holy Spirit upon us so that we who share the holy food may be transformed and brought into unity, becoming the body and blood of Christ. For example, "Grant that we, who are nourished by [Christ's] body and blood, may be filled with his Holy Spirit, and become one body, one spirit in Christ." In liturgies of the word plus holy communion we do not pray in this way.

Christ and the Paschal Mystery

As prayers of the local church, liturgies of the word plus holy communion are celebrations of the paschal mystery - Christ's death and resurrection. However, as already considered, they are not sacramental celebrations; they are not the eucharist.

In addition, the trinitarian basis and implications of the paschal mystery are not referred to: that Jesus was sent by God to reveal God's love, and that God and the Risen Christ then send the Spirit.

Last Supper: Because of the absence of the story of the institution of the eucharist, eucharistic communion is not linked to the last supper in the same way that it is at mass.

Anamnesis: Because of the lack of an anamnesis prayer, e.g., "Father, calling to mind the death your Son endured for your salvation, his glorious resurrection and ascension into heaven . . ." the paschal mystery may not be named at all, or not in its fullness. The communion rite itself does not name the paschal mystery.

In the absence of a eucharistic prayer, Christ received in communion might be viewed mainly as food and less so as the host and principal celebrant.

Sunday is not just the Lord's day, but also a celebration of Easter - of the death and resurrection of Christ. This point is less prominent if the liturgy does not celebrate the full paschal mystery.

17 Eucharistic Prayer 2
18 Eucharistic Prayer 3
19 Eucharistic Prayer 3
Anamnesis-Memorial and Time

*Past, present, future:* The predominant temporal orientation of the communion rite by itself is the present. In contrast, the eucharistic prayer relates the past to the present in a sacramental way: the paschal mystery of the past is made sacramentally present today.

The communion rite by itself also has a weak orientation towards the future, though the prayer after communion does refer to life after the present liturgical celebration. This orientation is much stronger in the eucharistic prayer, where we sing, “Christ will come again” and “Lord Jesus, come in glory.” We also pray “We hope to enjoy for ever the vision of your glory...”

Thanksgiving

The eucharistic prayer is, in part, a meal prayer — a table prayer — that is intimately linked to the subsequent sharing of the consecrated bread and wine. Other thanksgiving prayers, if used, are not prayers over the bread and wine, and not so closely related to holy communion.

The note of thanksgiving is not present in the communion rite by itself.

Ministry and Participation

**Lay ministers:** In liturgies of the word plus holy communion lay ministers of course have a greater than normal role and responsibility.

**Participation:** The type and extent of participation by the congregation in liturgies of the word with holy communion is different than in the eucharistic celebration. There is no preface dialogue, Holy holy, memorial acclamation, or great amen; participation through seeing and listening is of a different sort.

**The priest:** The presbyter of course is absent and some fear that the nature of the priest’s ministry at the eucharist might come to be misunderstood. That is, some might think that the priest is the sole human agent by which the consecrated bread for communion becomes available, rather than the entire community including the priest. In addition, the absent priest might be thought of mainly in terms of his “power to consecrate” the bread for communion, with lessened appreciation of his ministry of presiding over the celebration and life of the entire community.

Conclusions

**Many differences:** Clearly, liturgies of the word with holy communion are not the eucharist (mass); priest and people together do not pray the eucharistic prayer. There are also a number of other differences between these liturgies and the eucharist.

**Need to be clear:** In the exceptional position of today’s church, unfortunately, both the eucharist and liturgies of the word with holy communion have their place. We need to be clear about the nature of each liturgy and about the differences between them; they should not be confused.

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20 Eucharistic Prayers: Memorial Acclamations

21 Eucharistic Prayer 3

252

Only a bold person would undertake a description of the worship of one quarter of all Christians. Even the professor of liturgy at Notre Dame University draws back from his declaration on the opening page that "a global setting must be surveyed," to the realization on the next page that Europe and North America will provide a sufficient, and still a considerable, challenge.

Convinced that Protestant worship cannot adequately be studied by reference to liturgical texts, which are infrequently used, and do not cover all that takes place in church services, Professor White offers an account of the historical backgrounds to, and current expressions of, the worship of the Lutheran, Reformed, Anabaptist, Anglican, Separatist and Puritan, Quaker, Methodist, Frontier and Pentecostal traditions. The worship of these traditions is studied by reference to seven categories which are deemed to be applicable to the phenomena under review: people, piety, time, place, prayer, preaching and music. The author's stance is that of the "impartial historian," who makes no normative judgments as to how Christians ought to worship, and for whom "Survival is our only criterion for value" (p. 15).

A chapter on "Late medieval worship and Roman Catholic worship" provides a point of departure for accounts of the nine specified traditions. A considerable amount of historical information precedes the description of contemporary worship in each of the main chapters. There are important reminders along the way, of which we offer a random selection: "Frequent communion was the most difficult reform for Luther or anyone else to accomplish" (42); "What Luther did not appreciate was that Zwingli was stating in a new way the reality of Christ's presence as a transubstantiation of the congregation rather than of the elements" (59); "the early Anabaptists found profundities in believers' baptism as life-and-death commitment that had rarely been known in traditional Christianity since the early church" (91); "If we concern ourselves with the theology of the sacraments in general and the eucharist in particular, Calvin stands closer to the medieval tradition than does Cranmer" (94); "The Anglican tradition, more than any other, is a tradition of a book, a single book, the prayer book" (95); "the Quakers were the first to insist that in worship there is neither slave nor free, male nor female, laity nor clergy" (139); "Wesley observed that for many lukewarm Christians (i.e., not for the unconverted, as has sometimes been supposed) the eucharist could be both a confirming and converting ordinance" (154); "Having originated in preparations for the Lord's Supper, camp meetings gave the sacraments a major role and always ended with the baptism of converts and the eucharist" (173); "An important ingredient of their piety is the millennial hope that resonates in most Pentecostal worship" (199).

Among the conclusions are that the nine traditions have survived despite sporadic sacramental practice; and that "The richness of Protestant worship consists in its diversity and its consequent ability to serve a wide variety of people" (212). Professor White can be quite blunt: "If we profess that the way people worship establishes the way they believe, we have to accept the consequences" (213) -- but may not some worship as they do because of what they believe? As the author looks ahead, he is prompted to say that "It is likely that Christian worship will be enriched by contact with non-Christian worship" (214).

At this point the rest of the world is in view once more, and the question
arises: “How far has Christian worship become adapted to the cultural contexts in which it is now found?” This might be a question addressed to Professor White, whereas a theologian might wish to ask, “How far can/ought Christian worship be adapted?” Again, can we realistically speak of the nine liturgical traditions in contexts where, denominational labels notwithstanding, the American frontier has triumphed. We may hope for further assistance from Professor White on such matters in due course.

For the present we take this book seriously by making a number of remarks in ascending order of importance:

First, Professor White recognizes that the term “Protestant” has become opprobrious to many Anglicans, but does not indicate the discomfort which some Protestants may feel on finding the Mormons and Christian Scientists (and if these, why not many more?) treated in this book.

Secondly, there are a few slips. For example: (a) contra p. 80, the General Baptist strain of English Unitarianism only perpetuated believers’ baptism, and this only until the middle of the nineteenth century. (b) Hymn singing in England was pioneered by the Baptist, Benjamin Keach, closely followed by Watts; the Methodists came later (104, 129). (c) Pace p. 150, the Uniting Church in Australia was formed in 1977.

Thirdly, some statements are insufficiently balanced – a function, no doubt, of the need to compress so much material into a relatively small compass. Thus, (a) when we are told (16) that “The people who form Quaker worship are not the same as for classical Pentecostal worship,” an analysis of “same” would have been helpful. (b) Similarly, we could wish that some reasons for the insistence upon exclusive metrical psalmody in some Presbyterian circles had been specified (76). (c) Why did the Plymouth Brethren consider ordained clergy superfluous? (131). (d) Why was “enthusiasm” so suspect in the eighteenth century? (108). It was not simply or primarily that “it made religion a matter of the heart rather than the head” (152). What was feared was a return of the sectarian strife of the preceding century. (e) It is not correct to imply that all “English Methodists kept a strong affinity for the worship forms of the established church” (153).

Fourthly, given that the author has both Europe and North America in mind, some of his universal propositions ring strangely on the ear, and require qualification. Thus (a) the statement that most ordained Protestant ministers are referred to as “preacher” (20) is not true of Europe. (b) “Kingdomtide” is not a festival of European Methodists (166). (c) The statement “Other traditions (than the Frontier) have not found ways of inviting worship through the airwaves” (191) does not apply to Europe.

Fifthly, the author is somewhat at sea in regard to the Separatist tradition. (a) It is unfortunate, in the first place, that he designates the tradition hyper-Calvinistic (118); that term, so often used pejoratively, obscures more than it reveals. (b) To state that the Independents (?only) ground for free worship was that “liturgical autonomy had the benefit of making worship more immediately relevant than worship using fixed forms” (119) makes the Independents sound much more like those worshipers of the god Relevance in today’s “me” generation than in fact they were. Moreover, it obscures their primary grounds: they were against the “vain repetition” to which they thought set forms could lead; they objected to some of the content of the Book of Common Prayer; and they denied that it was the monarch’s prerogative to prescribe the worship of Christ’s Church. In all, they were more concerned with the Lordship of Christ than with what was meaningful to themselves. (c) To brand Separatist congregations “sectarian” (120) overlooks the catholicity of their ecclesiology, and minimizes the extent of their interdependence (as far as circumstances permitted). (d) It is surely an understatement to say that they “found it safer to flee to the Netherlands” (120). (e) The
importance of the church polity question is played down (123). In fact a revised (and widely unacceptable) understanding of the "matter" of the Church, and of Christ's Lordship over it, was being proclaimed by more radical Puritans.

Finally, the weakest historical references in the book are to the Enlightenment. Indeed, it is not too much to say that on occasion Professor White caricatures that phenomenon. Thus (a) he appears, mistakenly, to equate "Enlightenment" and deism's "watchmaker God" (52), whereas deism was no one thing, and there is much more to the Enlightenment than deism. (b) Hence his strictures (107) upon the alleged antisupernaturalism (and so weakened sacramentalism) of latitudinarians and others. But, for example, such eighteenth-century Protestant "Arians" as John Tayler and Micajah Towgood were staunch upholders of both baptism and the Lord's Supper (pace 152), and even Priestly did not altogether repudiate the supernatural. (c) It is simply not true to say that the "liberal tendencies of the time" moved "many" English congregationalists in a Unitarian direction (130). A few congregational individuals (some of them prominent), but only about six churches went over. (d) The assertion that "Methodist worship was a countercultural movement in the midst of the English Enlightenment" (152) overlooks the extent to which Methodism, with its early emphasis upon the conversion of souls, is, to a degree, "Enlightenment individuals gone religious." Hence a number of the ecclesiological problems which beset us today, including that religious consumerism and subjectivism which threatens the understanding of the Church as a convenant people, and prompt many to think of it as an aggregate of atoms. That is to say, we conclude from the conviction "Christianity is all to do with my soul" (which it is not), to "The churches exist to suit my taste" (which they do not).

We should not like our "sevenfold amen" to obscure the general usefulness of this book — a usefulness enhanced by a glossary of terms, a select bibliography, and two indices.

Reviewed by The Rev Dr Alan P. F. Sell, who holds the Chair of Christian Thought at The University of Calgary. Professor Sell is an historian of Protestant Christianity, and lectures widely in Britain and the United States as well as in Canada. For some years he was on the staff of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in Geneva, where he supervised many ecumenical dialogues between the Reformed Churches and other Churches.

Two other reviews of Professor White's important book have been published as separate full articles in the July 1990 issue of Worship (vol 64, no 4):

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