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

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

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The Sunday Lectionary

What does the new edition of the Sunday lectionary for Canada look like, and how does it differ from the previous edition? Upon what theological principles is the Roman lectionary based and how is it organized? What is a lectionary, and what purpose is it meant to accomplish? How may lectors be trained to proclaim the Word well?
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## ERRATUM

In NBL no. 130, the heading "Second Century Christian Eucharistic Controversies" on page 153 should read "Second Century Christian Paschal Controversies".
The Sunday Lectionary

Three liturgical books are especially important in our Sunday eucharistic celebrations: hymnal, sacramentary, and lectionary. Each in its own way helps to lead us into the mystery of God's living presence with us; each helps to move us to respond in praise of God and service of sisters and brothers in our own community and around the world.

Choices are necessary: We have a lectionary because at each liturgy we make a choice to read certain passages from scripture; simultaneously we choose not to read other passages. We cannot read the entire Bible each Sunday because of its length. In addition, there are parts of the Bible that, for various reasons, we decide not to read in the liturgy. Finally, we do not make our choices haphazardly or randomly, but do so in a systematic way. Our Sunday lectionary, then, is this systematic choice of scripture readings for the Lord's Day eucharist, and the book in which this system of readings is presented for liturgical use. The way we choose our liturgical readings implicitly expresses a certain understanding of scripture; the liturgical setting in which we proclaim these readings constitutes a viewpoint in which we interpret the biblical readings.

New Canadian edition: The publication in Canada this autumn of a new edition of the Sunday lectionary focuses our attention on this extremely important liturgical book. This issue of the Bulletin will describe this new edition, remind us briefly of the historical development of lectionaries, and review the principles upon which the contemporary Roman lectionary is based. The relationship between the Roman lectionary and those used in other churches is examined.

Reflection and questions: The church has had more than twenty-five years experience with the lectionary rooted in Vatican Council II's reform of the liturgy. Scholars, pastors and those in the pews are now able to reflect on their experience of this presentation of the Word of God, deduce some of the unvoiced assumptions involved in its preparation, raise questions about some of its features, and think about possible improvements. Some contemporary thinking along these lines is considered. At a more practical level, several articles will consider the training and formation of readers (lector).

An important document issued by the Canadian bishops is published in its entirety. This is "Sunday Celebrations of the Word: Gathering in the Expectation of the Eucharist." It is intended to guide the church in Canada as we deal with those Sundays on which communities are unable to celebrate the eucharist because of the shortage of presbyters.

Finally, other articles will consider the influence of cold winters on the liturgy, consider questions that are being raised regarding our present practice of first communion, and report further progress on ICEL's revision of the sacramentary.
Selected Reading

The Bible and Liturgy was the theme of the 1991 meeting of the international scholarly liturgical society, Societas Liturgica, held in Toronto. The following presentations from that congress have been published in Studia Liturgica, volume 22, number 1, 1992:

Paul De Clerck, "In the beginning was the Word".
Klaus-Peter Jorns, "Liturgy: cradle of scripture?"
Paul F. Bradshaw, "The use of the Bible in liturgy: some historical perspectives".
Manfred Josuttis, "The authority of the Word in the liturgy: the legacy of the Reformation".
Horace T. Allen, Jr., "Lectionaries – principles and problems: a comparative analysis".
Marjorie Procter-Smith, "Lectionaries – principles and problems: alternative perspectives".
John F. Baldovin, "Biblical preaching in the liturgy".

Some additional papers will be published in the next issue of this periodical.

French texts of the papers by de Clerck, Jorns, Bradshaw and Allen are also published in La Maison-Dieu, number 189, 1992. In addition, this issue also contains the following papers on this subject:

Pierre-Marie Gy, "Bible et liturgie en dynamique oecuménique".
Geoffrey Wainwright, "Bible et liturgie quarante ans après Danielou".
Louis-Marie Chauvet, "La dimension biblique des textes liturgiques".

Number 190 of La Maison-Dieu contains further articles on liturgy, scripture and lectionaries, both in the Christian liturgy and in several world religions.

Other Resources

Horace T. Allen, Jr, "Introduction" in Common Lectionary: The Lectionary Proposed by the Consultation on Common Texts (New York: Church Hymnal Corporation n.d.)
Lewis A. Briner, "A look at new proposals for the lectionary" Liturgy 3 (Spring 1983) 83-88
John H. Fitzsimmons, Guide to the Lectionary (Great Wakering: Mayhew-McCrimmon 1981)


Clark Hyde, "The Bible in the church: the lectionary as paradigm" *Worship* 61 (July 1987) 323-335

*The Liturgy and the Word of God* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press 1959). Still worth reading, these papers reflect the thinking of European liturgists on the eve of Vatican Council II.


Gerard S. Sloyan, “Is Church teaching neglected when the lectionary is preached?” *Worship* 61 (March 1987) 126-140


Gerard S. Sloyan, “Richer fare for God’s people?” *Liturgy* 90 21 (July 1990) 8-10

Gerard S. Sloyan, “The Hebrew Scriptures apart from their fulfillment in Christ” *Liturgy* 90 21 (October 1990) 9-11


Gerard S. Sloyan, “The independent second readings and the psalter” *Liturgy* 90 22 (January 1991) 8-10, 13


In addition, there is a wealth of literature that comments on the individual readings of each Sunday.
The term "lectionary" refers to two things.

- A book that contains passages of scripture chosen for proclamation in the liturgy and arranged for convenient liturgical use.

- The selection of scripture passages that have been chosen for liturgical use.

What is "new"? When we speak about the "new" Canadian edition of the Sunday lectionary, we are referring to the book that contains the scriptures proclaimed at the Sunday eucharist. We are not speaking about a new set of scripture passages. This point should be completely clear: the scripture passages chosen for the Sunday eucharist have not been changed; they will continue to be the same as those we have been proclaiming since 1970.

Translation: "Lectionary" in the sense of a selection of scripture passages chosen for liturgical use does not infer anything about the translation of the Bible to be used, and in Canada the bishops have named several biblical translations that might be used. In the sense of a book that actually prints the passages of scripture chosen for proclamation in the liturgy, however, "lectionary" necessarily implies the use of some particular translation. The new Canadian edition of the Sunday lectionary uses a different translation of the Bible than did the previous edition.

The Need

Out of stock: The reason a new edition of the lectionary was needed is quite pragmatic: there were no more copies of the old edition in stock. Communities that needed a lectionary simply could not be supplied.

At this point the bishops had two choices.

- They could reprint the previous edition of the lectionary.

- They could consider the possibility of using a different English translation of the scriptures and possibly, a different book design.

Translation

Jerusalem Bible: The previous edition of the Sunday lectionary used the Jerusalem translation of the Bible. It was published in English in 1966, and was based on a French translation put out earlier. A new French version of the…

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1 Information regarding the new edition of the lectionary has been supplied by The Rev John G. Hibbard, Director of the National Liturgical Office.
Bible de Jérusalem was published in 1973, and The New Jerusalem Bible in English followed in 1985.

Biblical scholarship flourished in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, and most or all of this work could not be used by the editors of the Jerusalem Bible. Important archaeological discoveries such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, literary finds at the ancient cities of Ugarit and Ebla, and contemporary studies of the biblical text and background have provided new insights that were not available to the translators and editors of the Jerusalem Bible translation previously in use in our Sunday lectionary.

Criteria: In order to provide the Canadian church with the most suitable biblical text, the bishops therefore decided to search for an improved translation of the Bible. Their criteria for a new version were:

- a faithful translation
- one that is proclaimable and understandable when heard
- one that is used ecumenically.

Revised Standard Version: It has long been appreciated that the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, produced under the auspices of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America, is a particularly accurate translation and one that is frequently used in seminaries and universities and for scholarly use; at the same time it was noteworthy for its literary qualities. It is widely used among the Christian churches, particularly in the United States and Canada.

New edition: The bishops were also aware that a new and up-to-date revision of the Revised Standard Version was in progress, and the New Revised Standard Version was published in 1989. They chose this biblical translation for the new edition of the Sunday lectionary, and the copyright owners have been very cooperative in providing computer tapes of the text and in permitting small changes in the text that the bishops requested for liturgical use in our church. We will therefore be using a translation that makes use of the best contemporary scholarship and one that is highly regarded in scholarly, literary and theological circles.

Methods of translation: The Jerusalem Bible and New Revised Standard Version employ different approaches to translation from the original Hebrew and Greek texts. The Jerusalem Bible uses a method called "dynamic equivalence," in which the meaning of an entire sentence or phrase is conveyed as a unit. The New Revised Standard Version employs a "literal" approach in which each word is translated literally. The motto of the revisors was, "As literal as possible, as free as necessary." Our new edition of the Sunday lectionary therefore will, at least initially, "sound" somewhat different from our previous version. However, one readily adjusts to the new style.

Inclusivity: The desire for greater accuracy in the New Revised Standard Version included an appreciation that some texts that in the original languages were intended to include women as well as men, were in English translated using masculine terms. To the extent that was deemed possible by the revisors, this shortcoming has been corrected.

Other changes introduced in the New Revised Standard Version include dropping "thee," "thou" and "thine" in the psalms and other prayers. In addition, "Yahweh" is never used for the divine name.
Trial use: After making a tentative decision to adopt the New Revised Standard Version, the National Liturgical Office conducted an experimental use and consultation of this translation in selected parishes across the country during Lent of 1990, using pre-publication texts supplied by the National Council of Churches. The overwhelming response was favourable.

Readings and psalms: Finally, in the new edition of the Sunday lectionary the biblical readings and the psalms will be from the same translation. Previously, though the Jerusalem Bible had been used for readings, the Grail version of the psalms were used.

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Editorial Work

Editorial committee: A lectionary for oral proclamation cannot be produced simply by printing the designated biblical verses. Instead, a good deal of editorial work is required, as will be described below. To assist in this work, an editorial committee of scripture scholars, liturgists and persons with editorial expertise was formed to assist the National Liturgical Office and the Episcopal Commission on Liturgy. All recommendations of the editorial committee required the approval of the Episcopal Commission before they were implemented.

The context: Because lectionaries take biblical passages out of their larger context, it is sometimes difficult for those who hear passages proclaimed to understand who is speaking, who the audience is, etc. It has been a long tradition of the church to append some kind of introductory sentence or phrase, called an incipit, to help readers in this regard. Providing appropriate incipits that are understandable, helpful, brief and that do not unnecessarily repeat material read at previous Sundays turned out to be a demanding and time consuming task, and sometimes required considerable ingenuity.

Sentences: Individual biblical translations sometimes differ in where sentences begin and end. As the official list of verses to be used is based on the Latin Vulgate translation, the English version chosen had to be checked to be sure that the readings began and ended with complete sentences. This was also critical when verses are omitted from the middle of readings. Punctuation sometimes had to be revised.

Oral proclamation: The editorial committee considered each reading from the perspective of oral proclamation. Will it be easy to proclaim from the point of view of the lector? Will it be easy to understand from the point of view of those who hear the passage proclaimed? Long sentences, such as are found in the writings of Paul, might need additional punctuation for greater clarity. Words that might be misunderstood by hearers, for example, "bier" and "reign" might have to be replaced by other terms.

Canadian usage: Certain editorial changes were made because Canadian usage differs in some respects from that in the United States. For example, measurements were converted to metric units (though no attempt was made to modernize monetary units; we continue to use talents and denarii.)
Psalm verses: Verses of the psalms are numbered differently in various translations, and the official verse designations had to be verified in the New Revised Standard Version book of psalms. In addition, the problem of beginning and ending with complete sentences is particularly acute in the psalms.

References to Jews and Jewish authorities: The church is more sensitive today with respect to language that names and refers to the Jewish people and to Jewish authorities than formerly was the case. Inspired by the statements of Vatican Council II and several postconciliar documents from the Vatican, the editorial committee made some changes, especially in the passion narratives, to lessen misunderstanding in this regard.

Process: All changes adopted by the editorial committee and then by the Episcopal Commission on Liturgy had then to be submitted to the copyright owner for its permission. The National Council of Churches proved to be very cooperative, and several of the changes proposed by the Canadian church have been adopted by them, for incorporation in subsequent printings and editions of the New Revised Standard Version. A representative of the Council addressed the Canadian bishops at their August 1992 meeting.

Presentation

Book design: Once the edited text of the lectionary is available, it has to be presented to us in the printed book. Book design and details of presentation also are complex matters, and were considered carefully in preparing our new edition.

Size and shape: The new edition of the Sunday Lectionary is a little shorter than the present version; it uses a 21.5 x 28 cm. page, and is a little thicker than the present version. The cover is a deep maroon. Both front and back are embossed with a beautiful cross, so that this design can be seen from both sides. The spine simply says, Sundays and Solemnities: Lectionary, CCCB.

The Study edition of the Sunday Lectionary is now available.

The paper used has a slight yellowish tint, to reduce glare, and it has been treated so that print on the reverse side does not show through.

Colors: The text is printed in two colors. Scripture passages and psalm texts are in black; everything else is in red. Thus titles, rubrics, and texts that are only to be sung are in red.

Arrangement: In an attempt to reduce confusion, the arrangement of readings for the three years of the liturgical cycle is different than in the present edition, in which all the Sundays are in succession, and within that scheme the readings for years A, B and C are placed one after another. Instead, each season is now divided into A, B and C sections. That is, we first encounter the first, second, third and fourth Sundays of Advent, year A; then the same Sundays of year B; and finally the same Sundays of year C. The same approach is taken to Lent, Eastertide, and Ordinary Time. The Christmas season and Triduum are not treated this way because so many readings are the same for all three years.
**Sense lines:** As at present, all readings are presented in sense lines to help lectors proclaim them well.

**Some rubrics** have been moved from the Introduction to the Lectionary to appropriate pages within the lectionary proper. This will remind readers and musicians of certain important points. For example, one rubric reminds us that a time of silence is to be observed after the first and second reading. Another rubric will remind us that the gospel acclamation is to be sung, and if this is not done, it is to be omitted.

A **new type font** and a larger type size are used to improve readability. Because only the readings are printed in black, it is not necessary to set them off by the use of bold type.

The **acclamations** at the end of the first and second readings and the gospel follow the latest recommendation of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), namely “The Word of the Lord” and “The Gospel of the Lord.”

**Seasonal psalms:** In the previous edition, the common psalms for each season were all printed together at the back of the lectionary. In the new edition, those for each season will be placed at the beginning of the readings for that season. Common gospel acclamations will also be placed together in a more usable place.

The **passion narratives** for Palm Sunday and Good Friday are printed in two formats: one for a single proclaimer and the other for three voices.

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**More to Come**

**In addition to the Sunday Lectionary,** a new edition of the lectionary for weekdays and ritual masses is also in preparation. It too uses the New Revised Standard Version, and will embody many of the principles used in the Sunday Lectionary. For example, all readings will be laid out in sense lines for ease of proclamation.

**Study edition** of the weekday lectionary will also be published in due course.
New conclusions: The International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) is recommending to the bishops of countries where English is a liturgical language that the conclusion to the first and second readings be changed from “This is the Word of the Lord” to simply “The Word of the Lord.” Similarly, the conclusion to the gospel would be changed from “This is the Gospel of the Lord” to simply “The Gospel of the Lord.” The new conclusions have been incorporated in the new Canadian edition of the Sunday lectionary.

ICEL gives three reasons for making these recommendations.

- First, to more accurately represent the Latin text, which has *Verbum Domini* following all three readings.
- Second, “to maintain the parallel to the distribution formula for communion,” which is, of course, “The Body/Blood of Christ.” In both cases the minister speaks an acclamation, to which we reply with an acclamation (“Thanks be to God” after the readings, “Amen” at communion). It makes little sense for the reader to make an announcement or make a descriptive statement (“This is...”) and for us to reply with an acclamation.
- Third, “to counter the tendency evoked by ‘This is...’ to make the acclamation the equivalent to a narrow ‘pointing gesture’ rather than a faith acclamation to God who speaks when the Scriptures are read.”

Focus on the book: This explanation refers to the practice in some places of holding up the lectionary up while “This is the Word of the Lord” or “This is the Gospel of the Lord” is being said. This gives the impression that the book that is being held up is “The Word/Gospel of the Lord”.

What do we mean? This change in the conclusion to the readings makes us ask, What exactly do we mean by phrases like “The Word of the Lord” and “The Word of God”? In fact they have a range of meanings, including the following.

- The book: Bible or lectionary.
- The words in these books.
- The proclamation of the biblical text in the midst of the community at worship.
- The message contained in the text when heard, understood, appropriated and responded to.
- The person of Jesus Christ.
- Ourselves as sisters and brothers of Christ in baptism.

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Presence of Christ: All these meanings, and perhaps others, are true in certain ways, but some are much more significant than others. Catholic liturgy and theology very much stress the importance of proclaiming the word in the liturgical assembly, so that the life-giving message of the biblical text is communicated to the faith-filled assembly by faith-filled lectors. This experience of the word that is proclaimed, however, is sacramental in the sense that it points to and mediates the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit in the midst of the assembly. Ultimately it is the person of Jesus Christ in the Spirit whom we acclaim when we say, “The Word of the Lord” and “Thanks be to God.”

A further insight into the meaning of the phrase, “The Word of God” is supplied by the great German theologian Karl Rahner, as reported by Elizabeth Johnson. She tells us that:

Karl Rahner has envisioned that because of the Word of God in our midst, it can now be seen that each of us is a little word of God. The one Word of God uttered in our midst reveals to us our own beauty, for we are each a little word and together we will spell out something great. Again, he [Rahner] describes each of us as a letter of the alphabet; when we are all assembled we will spell out a great word to the glory of God: ‘Human nature is the grammar of God’s self-utterance.’ Our human nature is so made that God can speak in and through us. All of this flows out of the incarnation, which is real and not a pretence on God’s part. That God actually became one of us leads us to value all human beings as gifted with a tremendous dignity precisely as human.²

Deep and complex: Experts in the field of biblical interpretation (technically referred to as “hermeneutics”) go into the question of the meaning of “The Word of God” in great depth. One writer tells us, with great scholarly care and qualification, that “Word of God” is a root metaphor that refers to God’s symbolic self-communication not only through scripture, but also through prophecy, nature, history, human beings and especially through Jesus Christ.³ This is difficult for us to understand without further reading and study. It strongly suggests to us, however, that phrases like “The Word of the Lord” or “The Word of God” are complex and very deep; we dare not take them for granted or use them lightly.

² Elizabeth A. Johnson, Consider Jesus. Waves of Renewal in Christology (New York: Crossroad 1990) 33
The Lectionary in History

Where did our lectionary come from? What are its historical roots? Did the church always use some kind of lectionary in its worship?

Jesus himself probably used a lectionary, though evidence for the system of readings in synagogues comes from after A.D. 70.

It is fairly well established that a system for the public reading of Scripture was used in the synagogues of the first century. Apparently this system had two sets of readings. The first, and oldest set, governed the selections from the Torah appointed for festivals, with the choice of reading dictated by the particular nature of the festival.

The other set of readings governed selection of Torah readings appointed for non-festival sabbaths. These, which are not so well attested, are the source of much controversy.

Sometime later, and scholars disagree exactly when, a second reading was added, the haphtarah (reading from the prophets). At first the practice of reading from the prophets was probably restricted to festivals, but later was extended to more ordinary sabbaths as well. In both cases, though, the haphtarah was treated as a secondary reading and was always preceded by the Torah. 

The earliest liturgical documents that provide evidence regarding the lectionary date from the sixth century. However, other kinds of evidence tell us that lectionaries were in use before that time. It is clear from the writings of early bishops, for example, that the readings for festivals, and perhaps ordinary Sundays as well, were selected according to some kind of system, from an early date. It is also clear, however, that presiders could exercise considerable freedom in their choice of texts. Certainly by the fifth century there is evidence for a well organized order of readings.

Different lectionary systems existed in various parts of the Western Church (Gallican, Milanese, Visigothic as well as Roman rites), as well as in the East. Though Rome generally had only two readings, three were customary in other

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1 Shelley Elaine Cochran, Liturgical Hermeneutics: The Lectionary as an Agent of Biblical Interpretation (Ph.D. Dissertation, Drew University 1990) 40-41

2 The following references cover various aspects of the history of the lectionary:


parts of the West. In his commentary on the liturgical year, Adrian Nocent provides charts of lectionary readings used in some of non-Roman rites of the West. It is interesting to compare these with those used in Rome.

**To help the reader:** Several different systems were developed to help readers find the proper readings.

- There might be marginal notes in Bibles to indicate the beginning (and sometimes the conclusion) of the reading.

- Alternatively, there might be lists consisting of the liturgical occasion, the name of the biblical book, and a few words from the beginning and a few words from the conclusion of the reading, connected by “until.”

- Finally, there are books in which the readings are written out in full. Such books were a great convenience; they were also expensive.

**Separate books** of gospels and of epistles were used, and the systems of readings used in each case were independent of the other.

**Since Charlemagne:** The system of readings used in the pre-Vatican II missal of 1570 was basically that used in the time of Charlemagne (around A.D. 800). The lectionary used as a model was a Frankish revision of a Roman lectionary system. Cyrille Vogel concludes, “Although the juxtaposition of epistle and gospel readings had come about more by chance than by design, it was destined to endure for more than a thousand years.” He also states, “The fact that a Roman lectionary or, rather a Romano-Frankish lectionary...finally prevailed in the West is an accidental result of the romanization of worship brought about by the Carolingian reformers...and had no connection with the intrinsic qualities of the documents in question.” He stresses that before the 1570 Missal, no one had any intention of requiring that one single system of readings be used by all.

**The present, post-Vatican II Roman Sunday lectionary** represents a new stage in the history of lectionaries, though it is strongly rooted in history as well.

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4 See ref. 2
The Roman Lectionary
Theological Foundations

Theology of the Word: The Introduction to the Lectionary for Mass, second edition, 1981, provides a fine theological overview of the liturgy of the word and consequently, of the lectionary. It is worth our serious reflection.¹

The Introduction begins by admitting that the working of God’s word is complex, as is our human response. But it is a living and active word, mediating the presence of Christ in the Holy Spirit.

4. In the celebration of the liturgy the word of God is not voiced in only one way nor does it always stir the hearts of the hearers with the same power. Always, however, Christ is present in his word; as he carries out the mystery of salvation, he sanctifies us and offers the Father perfect worship.

Moreover, the word of God unceasingly calls to mind and extends the plan of salvation, which achieves its fullest expression in the liturgy. The liturgical celebration becomes therefore the continuing, complete, and effective presentation of God’s word.

That word constantly proclaimed in the liturgy is always, then, a living, active word through the power of the Holy Spirit. It expresses the Father’s love that never fails in its effectiveness toward us.

The entire bible is worthy of proclamation, and liturgy and scripture are intimately related.

5. When in celebrating the liturgy the Church proclaims both the Old and the New Testament, it is proclaiming one and the same mystery of Christ.

The New Testament lies hidden in the Old; the Old Testament comes fully to light in the New. Christ himself is the center and fullness of all of Scripture, as he is of the entire liturgy. Thus the Scriptures are the living waters from which all who seek life and salvation must drink.

The more profound our understanding of the liturgical celebration, the higher our appreciation of the importance of God’s word. Whatever we say of the one, we can in turn say of the other, because each recalls the mystery of Christ and each in its own way causes that mystery to be ever present.

The word of God calls forth our response in the liturgy and in daily life; we cannot remain passive.

¹ Published in New Introductions to the Sacramentary and Lectionary (Ottawa: CCCB 1983)
6. In celebrating the liturgy, the Church faithfully echoes the Amen that Christ, the mediator between God and humanity, uttered once for all as he shed his blood to seal God’s new covenant in the Holy Spirit.

When God shares his word with us, he awaits our response, that is, our listening and our adoring “in Spirit and in truth” (John 4: 23). The Holy Spirit makes our response effective, so that what we hear in the celebration of the liturgy we carry out in the way we live: “Be doers of the word and not hearers only” (James 1: 22).

The liturgical celebration and the faithful’s participation receive outward expression in actions, gestures, and words. These derive their full meaning not simply from their origin in human experience but from the word of God and the economy of salvation, their point of reference. Accordingly, the faithful’s participation in the liturgy increases to the degree that as they listen to the word of God spoken in the liturgy they strive harder to commit themselves to the Word of God made flesh in Christ. They endeavour to conform their way of life to what they celebrate in the liturgy, and then in turn to bring to the celebration of the liturgy all that they do in life.

The word of God is central to the life of the church. It is required for the building up of the church.

7. In the hearing of God’s word the Church is built up and grows, and in the signs of the liturgical celebration God’s many wonderful, past works in the history of salvation are symbolically presented anew. God in turn makes use of the assembly of the faithful who celebrate the liturgy in order that his word may speed on in triumph and his name be exalted among all peoples.

Whenever, therefore, the Church, gathered by the Holy Spirit for liturgical celebration, announces and proclaims the word of God, it has the experience of being a new people in whom the covenant made in the past is fulfilled. Baptism and confirmation in the Spirit have made all the faithful messengers of God’s word because of the grace of hearing they have received. They must therefore be the bearers of the same word in the Church and in the world, at least by the witness of their way of life.

The word of God proclaimed in the celebration of his mysteries does not address present conditions alone but looks back to past events and forward to what is yet to come. Thus God’s word shows us what we should hope for with such a longing that in this changing world our hearts will be set on the place of our true joy.

The effective proclamation and living out of the word is prompted and inspired by the Holy Spirit.

9. The working of the Holy Spirit is needed if the word of God is to make what we hear outwardly have its effect inwardly. Because of the Holy Spirit’s inspiration and support, the word of God becomes the foundation of the liturgical celebration and the rule and support of all our life.

The working of the Holy Spirit precedes, accompanies, and brings to completion the whole celebration of the liturgy. But the Spirit also
brings home to each person individually everything that in the proclamation of the word of God is spoken for the good of the whole assembly of the faithful. In strengthening the unity of all, the Holy Spirit at the same time fosters a diversity of gifts and furthers their multiform operation.

**Organization**

The Roman Sunday lectionary is organized around three basic principles: a three year cycle, three readings each Sunday, and two kinds of Sundays.

**Matthew, Mark, Luke:** First, there is a three year cycle of readings, focused on the synoptic gospels. In year A the gospel according to Matthew is read preferentially; in year B it is Mark, and in year C is it Luke.

**John is read** toward the end of year B (because Mark is so short), and during the Christmas, Lenten and Easter seasons, because of its theological depth.

**Three readings:** A second principle is that there ordinarily are three readings on Sunday. The first is from the Old Testament (today also called the Hebrew Bible/Scriptures or the First Covenant/Testament) except during the Easter season when it is from the Acts of the Apostles. The second is from the letters of Paul and other New Testament writings. The third is from the gospels.

The Sundays of each year are of two types: those of the seasons, and those of Ordinary Time.

During the seasons of Advent, Christmastime, Lent and Eastertime, all three readings are related to the season or feast being celebrated.

During Ordinary Time the gospels and epistles (second reading) are read on a semi-continuous basis. That is, we start at or near the beginning of each book and read it (or parts of it) in a more or less consecutive manner. ("More or less" because we rarely if ever read all of a biblical book; instead we read excerpts.) Thus the gospel and second reading during Ordinary Time are not intentionally related in content.

The first reading, however, is chosen to be related to the gospel of the day.

**Pastoral Intent**

The Sunday lectionary contains a selection of biblical passages, not the entire Bible. Choices have been made, and the bases for the decisions of the editors are much discussed today. In their own minds, however, the intention of the editors was pastoral — for the benefit of the People of God. This is made clear in the Introduction.

58. On the basis of the intention of Vatican Council II, the Order of Readings provided by the Lectionary of the Roman Missal has been composed above all for a pastoral purpose.
60. The present Order of Readings for Mass, then, is an arrange-
ment of biblical readings that provides the faithful with a knowledge
of the whole of God's word, in a pattern suited to the purpose.
Throughout the liturgical year, but above all during the seasons of
Easter, Lent and Advent, the choice and sequence of readings are
aimed at giving the faithful an ever-deepening perception of the
faith they profess and of the history of salvation. Accordingly, the
Order of Readings corresponds to the requirements and interests of
the Christian people.

61. The celebration of the liturgy is not in itself simply a form of cat-
echesis, but it does contain an element of teaching. The Lectionary
of the Roman Missal brings this out and therefore deserves to be
regarded as a pedagogical resource aiding catechesis.

This is so because the Order of Readings for Mass aptly presents
from Scripture the principal deeds and words belonging to the histo-
ry of salvation. As its many phases and events are recalled in the
liturgy of the word, the faithful will come to see that the history of
salvation is contained here and now in the representation of Christ's
paschal mystery celebrated through the eucharist.

The pastoral intent of the editors of the lectionary also is made clear when
the Introduction discusses the length of texts, difficult texts, and omission of
texts.

75. A via media is followed in regard to the length of texts. A dis-
tinction has been made between narratives, which require reading
a fairly long passage but which usually hold the people's attention,
and texts that should not be lengthy because of the profundity of
their teaching.

76. ...texts that present real difficulties are avoided for pastoral rea-
sons. ...

77. The omission of verses in readings from Scripture has at times
been the practice in many liturgical traditions, including the Roman.
Admittedly such omissions may not be made lightly, for fear of dis-
torting the meaning of the text or the intent and style of Scripture.
Yet on pastoral grounds it was decided to continue the tradition in
the present Order of Readings, but at the same time to ensure that
the essential meaning of the text remained intact. One reason for
the decision is that otherwise some texts would have been unduly
long. It would also have been necessary to omit completely certain
readings of high spiritual value for the faithful because those read-
ings include some verse that is unsuitable pastorally or that
involves truly difficult problems.

Today the pastoral approach to the editors of the Roman lectionary is much
appreciated. If this approach is taken seriously and applied consistently, how-
ever, it should be possible to point out that some lectionary readings have not
turned out to be as "pastoral" as was intended. It should be possible to sug-
gest and make improvements where these are pastorally warranted.
The Lectionary and Ecumenism

Broad impact: The development and use of the Roman Sunday lectionary has had an influence far beyond the Catholic community, especially in North America. Horace Allen, writing some years ago, tells us:

The wisdom embodied in the work of [the committee that produced the Roman lectionary]...has been attested by a completely unexpected and salutary development, particularly in North America, but also in other parts of the world. That is the appropriation of the Roman Lectionary by more than a few Protestant and Anglican churches. This process began with the publication in 1970 of an edition thereof in The Worshipbook, a service book and hymnal jointly produced by three Presbyterian churches in the United States. Shortly thereafter the Episcopal and Lutheran churches included it in preliminary studies which resulted in its inclusion in the Draft Proposed Book of Common Prayer and subsequently adopted Book of Common Prayer, and also the Lutheran Book of Worship. In the meantime the United Methodist Church in the U.S.A. made an edition available in 1976 and the Disciples of Christ as well as the United Church of Christ in the U.S.A. adopted for voluntary use the Presbyterian version. These developments were materially assisted by the publication of a consensus edition in pamphlet form by the ecumenical Consultation on Church Union, representing (at that time) nine Protestant denominations seeking fuller unity.

In Canada the United Church has undertaken an experimental use of the three-year lectionary in a number of parishes, and the Anglican Church has published a pamphlet (1981) making it available.¹

The ecumenical lectionaries described here (plus several others) differed from the Roman lectionary in several respects; in general these differences were minor. In some cases there were denominational differences in the calendar. For example, Anglicans and Lutherans follow one medieval tradition of celebrating Transfiguration on the Last Sunday after Epiphany, while Catholics follow another medieval tradition of celebrating this feast on the second Sunday of Lent. In addition, Protestant churches do not use the so-called apocryphal or pseudepigraphical books of the Bible. Some changes were of an editorial nature, to try to improve readability. Furthermore, Anglicans and Protestants were less willing than Catholics to omit verses in the middle of a

reading. Finally, some churches preferred to use different passages from the Old Testament, though the gospels were rarely changed.

In the late 1970s the Consultation on Common Texts (CCT) decided to oversee a project designed to harmonize these several versions of the lectionary, to assess the changes that had been made in different churches, and attempt to come to a revised lectionary that would be acceptable to all and used by all. It worked through the North American Committee on Calendar and Lectionary, and its membership was widely ecumenical, including Roman Catholic representatives.

Common Lectionary: This work was completed in the early 1980s, and the so-called Common Lectionary (or CCT Lectionary) was published. It followed the basic calendar and structure of three readings presupposed by the Roman lectionary, and used the Roman gospel readings with only minor changes. The other New Testament readings were largely accepted with some small editorial changes and minor rearrangements. First readings for seasons and the second to eighth Sundays of Ordinary Time were also accepted with little change.

During summer and autumn: The major innovation of the Common Lectionary had to do with the first readings for the ninth to last Sundays of Ordinary Time. Instead of choosing Old Testament readings on the basis of their relationship to the gospel reading, the great stories of the Hebrew Scriptures are proclaimed in a semi-continuous manner.

- In Year A, the Common Lectionary proposed 20 Sundays from the Pentateuch, (beginning with Abraham's call and concluding with Moses' death), three Sundays of Ruth, and three Sundays of prophetic eschatological material.
- In Year B, it proposed 14 Sundays of the story of David, four Sundays of Wisdom literature, and eight Sundays substantially following the Roman lectionary.
- In Year C, there were 10 Sundays of stories about Elijah and Elisha, fifteen Sundays from the major and minor prophets, and one Sunday from the Roman lectionary.

Trial and evaluation: The Common Lectionary was to be used on a trial basis for several years, and then evaluated and revised in light of the experience of those who used it and the further reflection of scholars and pastors. The revision process engendered a great deal of debate between those who preferred to read the Old Testament stories in a semi-continuous manner (more or less as set out in the Common Lectionary) and those who preferred to chose the Old Testament reading on the basis of its relationship to the gospel reading (as in the original Roman lectionary). This debate continues; the revised Common Lectionary has just been published.

In England the Joint Liturgical Group (an ecumenical body similar to the Consultation on Common Texts) moved in a different direction. They first proposed a two-year lectionary that would have quite a different orientation compared to

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1 See note 1.
2 Revised Common Lectionary (Nashville: Abingdon 1992)
the Roman lectionary. It was highly thematic on all Sundays of the year. This lectionary was incorporated into the Alternative Service Book 1980 of the Church of England.

A four year cycle: Recently the Joint Liturgical Group has proposed a four-year lectionary in which John's gospel is given "its own year." This is now being debated and evaluated in Britain.

In Germany: While these developments were occurring in English-speaking countries, German Lutherans were developing their own lectionary. Briefly, this has a two year cycle of scripture readings, but provides for a six year cycle of preaching themes.

Horace Allen has recently provided us with a comparative analysis of the several lectionaries mentioned here.

Future developments are unclear. Some churches, such as the Anglican Church of Canada and the United Church of Canada, as well as several U.S. churches, will continue to follow the revised Common Lectionary. The Lutheran Church is divided on this issue. Other churches either do not want to make changes in the lectionary system they now use, or have not yet entered into the present debate on this issue, or are not interested in the ecumenical dimension of lectionary revision. Liturgical scholars generally see needs and opportunities for improvements in present lectionaries, but are divided on details. Pastors often have other concerns, particularly regarding the implications of each lectionary for preaching. Many see the need for improvements in present lectionaries, but they do not always agree on what changes are needed and how to carry them out.

Uniting or divisive? Whether the consensus on the lectionary that seemed to be emerging in the 1970s and 1980s will continue to progress, or whether the lectionary will turn out to be a divisive issue in the future, remains to be seen. In the meantime, many pastors and lay persons do find it a great blessing to be able to share the same readings (or at least the same gospel reading) each Sunday with their sisters and brothers in other churches.

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4 It is described and evaluated by Howard G. Hageman, "A brief study of the British lectionary" Worship 56 (July 1982) 356-364. See also Donald Gray, "The contribution of the Joint Liturgical Group to the search for an ecumenical lectionary" Studia Liturgica 21 (1991) 31-36

5 Joint Liturgical Group, A Four Year Lectionary (Norwich: Canterbury Press 1990)

6 See Karl-Heinrich Bieritz, "The order of readings and sermon texts for the German Lutheran Church" Studia Liturgica 21 (1991) 37-51

Principles and Questions

What principles? The use of the lectionary in the church since 1970, scholarly research into the history of the lectionary, and theological and pastoral reflection on the various contemporary versions of the lectionary, all have led to a greater appreciation of the principles that were—and are—being followed when a lectionary is constructed or formulated. Some of the contemporary thinking about these matters will be reviewed briefly here.

Aims and Purposes

What function? Paul Bradshaw makes the point that “when liturgical rites include the reading of some portion of scripture, it may appear that the same activity is being undertaken in every case. In terms of external appearances, indeed, that may be true; but the readings may in reality be exercising quite different functions in relation to the rite and the assembly.”

He notes four different functions that the reading of scripture in the liturgy might have.

• Didactic or educational: Are the readings principally aimed at the education and formation of the assembled community, with only a loose or non-existent connection with the rest of the liturgical rite? The didactic approach begins from the scriptures themselves and has as its main purpose the systematic inculcation of knowledge and understanding.

• Kerygmatic or Anamnestic: Are the readings intimately related to the meaning of what is being celebrated, interpreting and stimulating the liturgical action itself? This approach begins with the liturgical rite and envisages the biblical texts as fulfilling an illuminating and interpretative function in relation to that action.

• Paracletic: This begins with the worshipping assembly and asks what needs the people have which may be met by the reading of appropriate biblical passages. Its function therefore is not primarily educational or liturgical but rather, pastoral.

• Doxological: Here scripture is read “not for the benefit of the human ears which hear it but in order to offer glory to God.” This purpose may coincide with the other functions given above. However, “when...giving glory to God becomes such an important aspect of the activity that little or no attention is paid to whether the congregation can hear, understand, or make use of what is being read”, then the doxological function has become primary.

We may not ordinarily think about the “purpose” or “aim” of our lectionary. However, with Bradshaw’s classification in mind, we might reflect on the pre-

sent Sunday lectionary from this point of view. It is entirely possible that our perception of the aim or purpose may differ from Sunday to Sunday, between the liturgical seasons and Ordinary Time, and for the three different readings on a given day.

Horace Allen also considers this question.² He speaks of six, rather than four, possible functions of lectionaries:

• Full and Catechetical. This aim gives us a full range of biblical readings, some of substantial length, and intended to provide a rich selection from scripture. This aim is endorsed in the Introduction to the Roman lectionary, for example.

• Preaching. In this case the provision of scripture readings is primarily to provide motivation for preaching.

• Feasts, Festivals, and Seasons. Here the lessons tell the stories recalled in the festivals and seasons, or illustrate and illuminate them in some way.

• Cultural, Climatic, Seasonal, and Ethnic. It is difficult to be precise about this aim, but it has to do not only with questions of the church year, but also with the rhythms and feasts of secular society.

• Liturgical and Doxological. Here the lectionary is closely related to the liturgy of the day and with the praise of God that is celebrated in the liturgy.

• Historical and Ecumenical Witness. In this case there is a concern that the lectionary of our time be linked with the tradition of the church through the ages. It should also have connections with the usages of other churches, both historical and contemporary.

In light of these possible purposes, Allan evaluates the Roman Catholic Sunday lectionary as follows:

[It] is quite up-front with its emphasis on fullness of readings and the importance of preaching, especially from the Gospel. This is also a result of its large-scale commitment to semi-continuous reading. [It] is also quite serious about the festivals, preferring for those Sundays a kind of "linkage," typological or otherwise. Possibly because of its international use, it does not seem to pay much attention to cultural, seasonal, or ethnic considerations. Although it is committed to the liturgical setting and direction of the liturgy of the word, and in fact prefers fairly brief readings for the first and second reading, it freely assigns rather extensive gospel pericopes, especially in Lent, for the purpose of supporting the catechumenal program of the parish. Finally, [it] keeps touch with much of Christian history, indeed, more than the preconciliar one-year cycle did, and ...[it] is, in fact, now a critical ecumenical document.

Interpretation

By the way it chooses readings from the Bible as a whole, each lectionary interprets the Bible; our liturgical use of the lectionary imparts this interpretation to the assembly. Until recently we have not been very conscious of this fact, but scholars are now beginning to reflect seriously on the way our lectionary views scripture.3

Interpretation is carried out by what is included and what is left out. Women are pointing out that few passages that speak of biblical women are included in our lectionary. (An article on this subject will be included in a subsequent issue of the lectionary.) Passages that deal with creation are also in short supply, and many passages dealing with sensitive ethical and moral issues are also absent.

Inclusion and exclusion are in turn influenced by the number of years of the lectionary cycle and the number of readings used each day. Interpretation is also provided when one decides to read passages according to various "themes" or in a semi-continuous manner. There are advantages and disadvantages to each system, but each is an exercise in interpretation. The way in which the several readings on a given day are connected – or not connected – also involves interpretation. They may be independent of each other, or one reading may "control" the interpretation of one or both of the others.

The biblical passages to be read may be chosen for didactic reasons, or doctrinal reasons, or to speak to certain moral issues, or how they support preaching, or because there is a historical precedent. All these reasons may be valid, but all may lead to the omission of other material which is also important. The length of readings and selection of parts of a longer story, also give an interpretative message.

It is not as if interpretation can be avoided in the construction of a lectionary; that is simply not possible. Rather, we need to be conscious and critical about the interpretation that the lectionary provides, and acknowledge this in our study and preaching.

The first reading: In the eyes of many scholars – though not all – the weakest aspect of the Roman Sunday lectionary is its use of the Old Testament.4 Deficiencies are seen, for example, in what is omitted: passages about creation, those having to do with grave moral issues, those having to do with women, etc., the great cycles of stories about the patriarchs and matriarchs. In addition, the use of certain passages of Isaiah, for example, during Advent and Christmastime, imposes an interpretation regarding the Messiah and regarding prophecy and fulfilment that many contemporary scholars would question. Finally, the fact that passages from the Hebrew Scriptures for the Sundays of Ordinary Time are chosen in light of the gospel reading seems to some to give the Old Testament less weight than it deserves. These questions continue to be discussed.

3 Shelley Elaine Cochran, Liturgical Hermeneutics: The Lectionary as an Agent of Biblical Interpretation (Ph. D. Dissertation, Drew University 1990)
Readers as Storytellers

Really effective liturgical readers – proclaimers of the word of God in the midst of the assembly – are of the greatest importance to Christian communities. Poor readers do not convey the message that is offered in scripture, they do not excite the assembly with the presence of Christ with them, they do not move the community to response, conversion, witness and ministry. Poor readers constitute a barrier between the assembly and the word of God, though the word does have a power that is greater than the ministers of the word.

Training is important: Some persons who read scripture in the Sunday assembly either do not have the appropriate gift for this ministry, or have not received appropriate training. They – and the assembly as a whole – need help. Training readers, whether experienced or inexperienced, is a task and a responsibility that never goes away; it needs to be undertaken on a regular basis.

Proclaiming scripture effectively involves a number of steps, including the following:

- reading the words
- reading the words out loud
- reading the words out loud to others
- discerning the faith-message in the text
- communicating the faith-message to the assembly.

To and for others: Here we are concerned with the movement from the second to the third step: from simply reading the words out loud to oneself, ignoring other persons present, to reading the words out loud to and for others. These are different activities, and they require somewhat different skills. Liturgical readers, to be effective in the assembly, must consciously read out loud to and for other persons, not simply to themselves. They need to acquire the additional skills, as well as attitude, required for reading out loud to others.

A lost art: Reading aloud to other persons is becoming a lost art in our contemporary society. It is not something we do very often, whether at home or at work or in social situations. We have radio, television, stereos, computers and computer games instead. If we read, it is most often by ourselves and to ourselves.

Children: One place where reading to others is still done is where there are small children, and even here, as we all know, television, stereos, and computer games have displaced reading to a considerable extent. Nevertheless, reading aloud to children may be the best forum in which to teach potential liturgical readers what it means to read to others and for others, and how to go about doing it.

Reading to children is never an exercise in communicating dry factual information to them, either. It is telling the children a story. And it is evoking a response from the children as well. Proclaiming scripture in the liturgy likewise
is storytelling and the evoking of a response, though in a mixed community of children and adults.

**Two practical suggestions** emerge from these reflections. First, recruit as potential liturgical readers persons who are experienced in reading – telling stories – to children: parents of youngsters, grandparents, child-care workers, perhaps babysitters and nannies. Of course they will need additional training in other areas, but they probably are experienced in communicating stories to other persons.

**Practice telling stories:** Second, require potential liturgical readers to demonstrate competence in reading stories to children. They might start by reading regular children’s books to children, whether in a church setting or in someone’s home. The children themselves will help them acquire and hone their skills, and a parent or teacher can make helpful suggestions as well. They might then graduate to biblical stories geared to children, and to versions of the Bible published for children.

**For adults too:** If readers then are able to communicate stories well to children, they can easily make the transition to communicating the stories of God’s great love and challenge that are found in the liturgical readings to the entire assembly, young and not so young.

**A ministry of children:** Reading aloud to children can be enjoyable as well as challenging for adults. The children become the teachers; they perform a wonderfully important ministry to the adult members of the assembly in this way. It is the children, through their response to the stories told by liturgical-readers-in-training, who will tell us when someone has acquired sufficient skills to move on to other aspects of reader training.

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Reflections on Proclaiming Scripture

Dianne Barfield

Dianne Barfield is a member of Light of Christ Catholic Community in Edmonton, Alberta, and on the staff of the archdiocesan Youth Commission. She is a superb proclaimer of scripture, and was invited to share some reflections on this ministry.

Background

As a child of nine years, I was fortunate enough to be chosen to be the narrator in a play about Our Lady of Fatima. The play never got off the ground, but that teacher spent hours and hours with me alone teaching me how to project my voice, read slowly and pronounce each word.

At the Junior/Senior High School that I attended, elocution was a regular part of the curriculum, thus the practice of speaking singly or collectively was a very common part of our lives. Annually our class produced some kind of dramatic presentation for the public.

As a teacher I worked with dramatics in the classroom both in Britain and in Edmonton. The first comment my supervisor offered after sitting in on one of my lessons was that my students would never be able to use the excuse that those at the back of the class couldn't hear. I guess I've always been loud. I also participated in amateur dramatics.

As a parent, I read to my children regularly, especially at bed time, and they loved it. When they were old enough for the kinds of books where you had a cliff-hanger at the end of the chapter, they just couldn't wait for the rest of the story.

As an RCIA catechist, I was further convinced of the tradition and value of storytelling and of our life experiences.

Reflection and Preparation

I like to be able to spend some time in reading over the passage beforehand to get a feel for how the message should sound, what kind of mood is present, etc.

I see myself as a vehicle. There has to be a way by which the words leave the page and travel to all present. I see that happening with me as the transmission agent. In preparing for this I always ask that pride be erased and that God will use me to make the Word travel. I ask to be conscious that my "loudness"
is a gift to be used so that those present can know the power and joy that is contained in each chosen passage.

Approach to the Scripture

The Word must be heard. It was written to be received by our hearing and therefore must reach our hearing whatever the quality of our hearing. The Word must arrive at its destination, and therefore must be loud enough in its delivery.

The authors of sacred scripture were talented writers in their own right, and I think that this has to be taken into account when preparing to proclaim the Word. I find that very often there is a grouping of events, ideas, repetitions, etc., that add to the message and are important to identify and express during the reading.

Scripture is full of drama and so often the chosen passages contain a sequence that builds up to a climax, or there is a group of usually three ideas that all point in the same direction or there is suspense that has to be carried along. For those who are receiving the Word, I feel that all this has to be conveyed so that they have the full effect of what is on the page. I feel it should be given all the "oomph" that it deserves.

Lastly, and for me the most important: It is always GOOD NEWS! When I proclaim, I want those who hear to know that this is the best there is and that THE WORDS will almost leap at them to embrace them, if that is not too aggressive a concept.

We have a wonderful story to tell, to each other at our liturgies and to those who haven't heard it yet. We have to do the very best with that story each and every time we tell it. If it's worth telling, it's worth telling well.
Resources for Training Readers

Many resources for helping and training lectors or readers are available today. This is a short list of some such resources.

Charles Callaci, *How To Be An Effective Reader* (Ramo II Publishers: Chino, CA 1982)


*Guidelines for Lectors* (Green Bay: Diocese of Green Bay 1973)


George Martin, *Reading Scripture as the Word of God. Practical Approaches and Attitudes* (Ann Arbor: Word of Life 1975)


*Proclaiming the Lord in our Midst* (Detroit: Department of Worship, Archdiocese of Detroit n.d.)


*Workbook for Lectors and Gospel Readers* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications) Published annually.

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### Next Year's Issues

**The Christian Funeral II**: Bulletin 132, Spring. This issue will include the main presentations at the May 1992 national conference on the pastoral implementation of the revised *Order of Christian Funerals*.

**The Art of Presiding**: Bulletin 133, Summer. Skills and attitudes that make a good presider, the practice of concelebration, presiding by lay persons and related topics will be considered in this issue.

**Liturgy and the Cultural Mosaic**: Bulletin 134, Autumn. How do culture and liturgy interact in the Canadian scene? What are the cultures of this country, how do they influence our liturgical celebrations, and how does the liturgy resist the dark side of contemporary culture? The question of multilingual celebrations will be considered as well.

**Reconciliation in Our Broken World**: Bulletin 135, Winter. Before we can adequately address questions surrounding the sacrament of penance, we need to consider reconciliation in a broader perspective, both as a human need and experience and the many ways it is celebrated liturgically.
Sunday Celebrations of the Word: Gathering in the Expectation of the Eucharist

Introduction

For some years now, a number of Christian communities have no longer been assured of the regular presence of a priest to preside at the Sunday Eucharist. Indeed, this situation became so widespread that on 30 June, 1988, at the specific request of the Holy Father, the Congregation for Divine Worship published a Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest.1

This novel situation calls for previously unforeseen pastoral arrangements to sustain the Sunday assembly. In the absence of the pastor or another priest, deacons or lay men and women are called to lead the Sunday prayer of the community. These celebrations are appropriately called “Sunday Celebrations of the Word”, for this indicates their specific liturgical character. However, to recognize clearly their relationship to the Eucharist, they might also be called by the fuller title, “Sunday Celebrations of the Word in Anticipation of the Eucharist.”

Such celebrations are necessary in the circumstances, and in themselves have a positive value. Nonetheless the Church can never accept as inevitable or desirable the situation which gives rise to them. The Eucharist is the very centre of the Church’s life. The Second Vatican Council taught this clearly, when it said, “The aim and object of apostolic works is that all who are made children of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of his Church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord’s Supper.”2 At the same time the Church’s constant tradition has always upheld the necessary link between the celebration of the Eucharist and the ministry of the ordained priesthood. Where communities are deprived of the ability to celebrate the Eucharist because of the lack of priests, Sunday celebrations of the Word must be viewed only as an interim measure, and never as a solution.

We recognize that this situation is a source of real distress for a large number of our Catholic communities. For this reason, we earnestly ask the prayers of the Catholic people of our land that God will provide our Church with the

1 The complete text may be found in National Bulletin on Liturgy, no. 122 (June 1989), pp. 108-119.
2 Sacrosanctum Concilium (Constitution on the Liturgy), no. 10.
means to have the priests who are needed to preside at the celebration of what is “the source and the apex of the whole Christian life.”

Throughout our country, gathering on Sunday for the Eucharist has been an almost constant norm, in fidelity to the tradition going back to the very beginnings of the Church. After Christ’s resurrection, his disciples gathered to share “the Lord’s Supper” in his memory (1 Cor 11: 20). Since then, faithful to Christ’s command, the Church assembles each Sunday as for a weekly Easter, and celebrates in the Eucharist his dying and rising.

The bishops have never ceased to recall to all the baptized the importance, indeed the obligation, of assembling each Sunday for the Eucharist. In a 1986 message to the faithful, “The Meaning of Sunday in a Pluralistic Society,” the Canadian bishops clearly reaffirmed the call to keep Sunday in its fullest sense as the Lord’s Day, for it should be for all people, “a day of playfulness and simplicity, of contemplation, of wonder, of praise and enjoyment of life.”

In continuing to uphold the Sunday assembly as essential to the Church’s life, the 1988 Roman document took account of a variety of questions and situations. Moreover, it provided guidelines for the decisions that are to be made about the form of Sunday celebrations when there is no priest. The Directory leaves to each bishop the task of determining the conditions for its application in his own diocese.

The present document, prepared at the request of the Episcopal Commissions for Liturgy of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, is intended to help local churches to implement the principles of the Directory. Some theological considerations and other pastoral notes are provided to indicate the directions that Christian communities might take in the preparation of Sunday worship when a priest is lacking.

Although these notes are designed primarily with parish communities in mind, the principles here set forth are also applicable to similar situations – hospitals, prisons, senior citizens’ homes, for example – where there are Sunday liturgical celebrations other than the Eucharist.

It is important that these Sunday Celebrations of the Word respect the aspirations of the people of God to “be Church” by remaining truly vital Christian communities. It is hoped that they will sustain and foster a true love of the Scriptures. Let them also stir up a burning desire for the Eucharist, that saving mystery which makes us one in faith through the risen Christ, our one and eternal Pastor.

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  Bishop of St. George’s
  Chairman, Episcopal Commission for Liturgy

29 August 1992

3 Lumen Gentium (Constitution on the Church), no. 11.
4 Pastoral Reflections by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 4 September 1986.
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Sunday in the Christian Context

Sunday Has Always Been a Gathering-day for Christ’s Disciples

1. Church history teaches us that from the very beginning Christians gathered on Sunday. The four Gospels (Mt 28:1; Mk 16:2; Lk 24:1; Jn 20:1-6) and the Acts of the Apostles (20:6-12) describe the life and practice of the first Christians. They insist on the importance to them of the first day of the week, the day the Risen Lord was revealed to his disciples. From the Resurrection day itself (Jn 20:19; Lk 24:33), Christ’s disciples have kept Sunday as a day to gather.

2. Texts from the first centuries of Christianity give witness to the constancy of this practice. At the beginning of the second century, the Didache prescribed: “On the ... Day of the Lord, come together and break bread and give thanks, having first confessed your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure.” In the same period, Pliny, the Roman governor of Bithynia, noted of the Christians of his region that “it was their habit on a fixed day to assemble before daylight and to recite by turns a form of words to Christ as a God.” Similarly, the writer Justin in his Apology, a work written about 150 A.D., said that on Sundays Christians, whether they lived in the towns or in the countryside, gathered for worship in the one place.

3. Linked from the beginning to the Resurrection, the Sunday assembly was a standard feature not only of the apostolic age, but also of the centuries which followed. Christians would accept martyrdom rather than forsake common Sunday worship: “We ought to be together. We cannot live without the Lord's meal; it is more important for us than life itself.” Prior to the time of the Emperor Constantine, when Sunday was not yet a day of rest, Christians would gather for the breaking of the bread before taking up their daily work. In Canada, our own ancestors showed the same fidelity to Sunday worship.

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6 Pliny, Epistola, X.96.7, quoted in ibid., p. 13.

7 Justin, Apologia, I, LXVII, The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325, ed. Alexander Rogers and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1979), I, p. 186. The text reads in part: “And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together in one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, ...the president verbally instructs and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and ...when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings...and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons.... But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day, on which God, having wrought a change in darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead.”

8 W. Rordorf, Liturgie, foi et vie des premiers chrétiens, p. 45.
Especially in less populous areas, and even to relatively recently times, lay people frequently led the local community in Sunday prayer in situations where Mass might be celebrated only quarterly or even twice a year.

4. As these few examples show, Christians have always considered the Sunday assembly indispensable. In it is experienced both the encounter with the Risen Lord and the need of his active and life-giving presence until his return in glory. For this reason the Church has always affirmed the vital necessity of the Sunday assembly, which anticipates that new world in which God's people will be gathered and of which they have a part even now.

They Receive the Word and Share the Eucharist

5. The gathering of the baptized on the Lord's Day is the gathering of a community which celebrates the Eucharist in Christ's memory. If Christians assemble, it is because they have been called together to encounter Christ. This is an encounter in the form of a dialogue. It includes listening, silence, and contemplation, as well as times of prayer, of praise, and of thanksgiving. In this exchange, God's people leave themselves open to God's tender care. They recall and re-live the memory of God's wondrous deeds and steadfast love as they are nourished at "the table of God's Word and of Christ's body."

6. The Second Vatican Council restored to the Word of God that same importance it held during the first five centuries of the Church. The readings from the Old Testament, from the Gospels, and from the other New Testament writings, together spread before the people of God a marvelous feast, breaking open for them the mystery of salvation in all its splendour. In the proclamation of the Word Christ is present to his people. Including also the singing of the Psalm which contains echoes of the first reading, the acclamation to Christ present in the Word, and the homily which brings word and life together, the liturgy of the Word forms a key moment in the dialogue between God and the gathered Church.

7. Thus formed by the Word and brought together in a communion of faith, Christians celebrate the liturgy of the Eucharist. Through the ministry of the priest, acting in the name of Christ and on behalf of the assembly, the Church becomes obedient to the command of the Lord Jesus at the Last Supper: "Take this all of you, and eat it: this is my body.... Take this all of you, and drink from it: this is the cup of my blood...shed for you and for all. Do this in memory of me." The Church does what Christ did. It brings forward the gifts, gives thanks to God, breaks and shares the bread which has been consecrated, and dispenses the cup of salvation. It is the Eucharist that is the cornerstone of the Church, for here, as the memory of the Lord's deeds is celebrated, these are made sacramentally present. Here the Church is brought into being, formed,

9 General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 8.
10 It is taught in the Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Verbum): "The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures as she venerated the Body of the Lord, insofar as she never ceases, particularly in the sacred liturgy, to partake of the bread of life and to offer it to the faithful from the one table of the Word of God and the Body of Christ." no. 21.
11 "He is present in his word since it is he himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church." Sacrosanctum Concilium, no. 7.
and renewed. Here Christ's Body grows in unity through that same life of Christ which is shared by each of its members. Christians feed upon that which they are and are called to be, the body of Christ, for the eucharistic body is the foundation of the ecclesial Body: "The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we partake of the one bread." (1 Cor 10:16-17)

They Build Up the Church and Reveal It to the World

8. In welcoming the Word and in giving thanks to the one who saves them, God's gathered people form the Church, the community of disciples and witnesses to the resurrection. The community of believers does no less than give witness in the world to that presence of the Risen Saviour who never ceases to give life to the Church. The faithful thus strive to become a community which has but "one heart and soul." (Acts 4:32)

9. The life of the first Christian communities shows us that the ideal is not always easy to attain. Voluntary sharing conflicted with individualism (Acts 5:1-12; 6:1; 2 Cor 8:1-24). At Corinth, some Christians even dared to eat and drink in the presence of their hungry sisters and brothers without sharing their food (1 Cor 11:21). In communities of mixed Jewish and pagan origins, cultural diversity created considerable tensions. Yet, however great, these tensions could never overpower that unity which has its roots in Christ. It is Christ who encounters the community gathered in faith, who is its foundation, who challenges it, and who binds it together. Whenever Christians gather on Sunday they continue to make a statement about Church. Responsive to the call of their Lord to live in communion, whatever their roots, or their opinions, their age or social status, their race or culture. Even when those assembled are few, the community is a sign within the world of God's transcendence and love. They make present within a given area the Church of Christ. They proclaim that for them the Risen Lord is life and that his gospel is the light of life. The gathering for Sunday eucharist is the expression of a Church whose mission is in the world. The preeminent place of encounter with the Lord, this gathering is truly a grace, with no less a power than that to transform the human condition.

The Sunday Assembly Which Gathers in Anticipation of the Eucharist

10. In certain areas, due to the lack of priests, communities are unable regularly to celebrate the Sunday Eucharist. When they continue to gather on that day, they are not thereby any less responsive to the call of the Risen Christ, but their assembly is not lived out in its fullest form, which is the Eucharist. It is for this reason that we can, in a more particular way, speak here of "Sunday Celebrations of the Word in anticipation of the Eucharist." This should not suggest that they are not authentic liturgical celebrations in themselves nor should it obscure the truth that every other liturgy finds its completion only in the Eucharist. At the same time it must be recognized that while these celebrations look forward to the day when the Eucharist will again be celebrated within the community, they also flow from the Eucharist and are the worship of a
community which has been sustained by it. In this context, however, the particular designation "in anticipation of the Eucharist" recognizes the hope of the assembly that it may once more, and soon, celebrate in all its fullness "the mystery of faith."

A brief look at the strengths and limitations of the Sunday assembly in this form is in order.

Its Strengths

It Is a True Sunday Assembly

11. When we speak of a non-eucharistic Sunday celebration as an assembly, we recognize an invitation and a response. The Sunday gathering of God's people is important in itself. Each community which assembles to hear God's word is truly Church, and Christ is always present in it. It possesses a common faith and its unity from diversity; it is in communion with the Church throughout the world. In this manner, those gathered in Christ's name form the Church in that place and give witness to its presence. When the assembly holds fast to Sunday (the Lord's Day), it does so because it is of vital necessity for personal faith as well as that of the Church, a need experienced since Easter Day itself. Indeed, any celebration of Sunday is always a celebration of the Lord's Paschal Mystery, in which the whole Church dies with Christ, is buried, and rises with him.

It is Liturgy

12. The Sunday celebration of the Word is truly liturgy. It is the saving action of Christ the Head among his people and the work of his Body which is the Church. Gathered on that day when the Church throughout the world keeps memory of the Risen Lord, the faithful of a particular parish proclaim the Father's glory, through the Son, in the communion of the Holy Spirit. This assembly which gathers to celebrate God's Word truly celebrates the liturgy in union with the members of the Church universal.

The Gathered Church Gives Thanks and Praise to God

13. This Sunday celebration honours the Father by giving thanks for the salvation so freely given through the death and resurrection of Christ. Those who gather on Sunday to welcome with joy God's saving word truly give thanks to the Father even when circumstances do not permit them to celebrate that best of all thanksgivings which is the Eucharist.

It Is Graced by Christ's Presence

14. When he ascended into heaven Christ did not cease to be present to his Church. The Second Vatican Council recalled, when it underlined the various modes of his presence, that "to accomplish so great a work Christ is always present in his Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations.... He is present in his word, since it is he himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church. Lastly, he is present when the Church prays and sings, for

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See the recommendations in Sacrosanctum Concilium, no. 35 (4), and in the Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest, nos. 20, 32, 35.
he has promised ‘where two or three are gathered together in my name there I
am in the midst of them’ (Mt 18:20).” Thus the assembly which gathers on
Sunday is itself a place of Christ’s presence; it hears his word, by which Christ
becomes present anew.

15. Christ is also present under the form of the bread which has been conse­
crated at an earlier celebration of the Eucharist when this is given and shared
in communion at a Sunday celebration of the Word. But Pope Paul VI reminds
us that “this presence is called the real presence not to exclude the other kinds
as though they were not real, but because it is real par excellence.” Thus
even when communion does not take place, the presence of Christ spoken of
by Vatican II is truly realized in this form of Sunday celebration, for it is in the
full sense a liturgical action.

It Brings the Community to Discover Ministries and Gifts

16. Sunday celebrations of the Word require an even greater involvement of
the laity than might otherwise be the case. Obviously even apart from the cele­
bration of the Eucharist the important liturgical ministries of hospitality, pro­
claiming the Word, cantor, choir and music leader, communion, acolyte, envi­
ronment, etc., are still needed. In the absence of a priest, however, for Sunday
celebrations of the Word, some will be called to new ministries: the coordina­
tion of other ministries, leadership of the liturgical assembly, and preaching
God’s Word. In this way the faithful are often helped to rediscover the priestly
character of their baptism, which endows them with a mission to acclaim
throughout the world the presence of the living God. From the teamwork which
is essential to a community preparing such liturgies can flow a new sense of
the whole celebrating community as the primary subject of worship: the Body
of Christ, united by him and animated by his presence, and yet with its variety
of persons and gifts.

The Church Is Renewed in its Mission in the World

17. The liturgical assembly always comes from the world of daily life, and is
sent forth from the liturgy into that world. When on Sundays God’s word is pro­
claimed in the midst of the whole community, when it is heard in faith, and
when it is kept in the lives of those who have heard it, the Church is fortified to
declare the Gospel in the world around it. Indeed, the power of Christ present
in his word refreshes the Church, which experiences the same earthly
situation as humanity in general, that it may be “a leaven and kind of soul for
human society as it is to be renewed in Christ and transformed into God’s fam­
ily.” From its worship, always both summit and source of the Church’s activity,
comes the mission of the community in, to, and for the world. Thus the Sun­
day celebration of the Word truly inspires and directs the encounter with
human activity and culture, so that Christians, in solidarity with the whole
human family, may give witness to Jesus Christ and service to those in need.

13 Sacrosanctum Concilium, no. 7.
14 Mysterium Fidei (Encyclical on the Doctrine and Worship of the Eucharist, 3 September 1965),
no. 39
15 Gaudium et Spes (Constitution on the Church in the Modern World), no. 40
16 Sacrosanctum Concilium, no. 10.
Its Limitations

It Is Not the Eucharist

18. The rich character of a Sunday celebration of the Word which anticipates a future eucharistic celebration should not lead us to overlook its limitations by contrast with the celebration of the Eucharist itself. It is not the Eucharist, for it does not make present the fullness of Christ's saving action. Deacons or lay persons who lead it are not ordained to act in the name of the Church, and therefore in Christ's person, in the offering of the Eucharist. They are thus unable to do, in his memory, what Christ did — all those things brought together for us in the liturgy of the Eucharist — to take bread and cup, and having given thanks to God, to break the bread and offer the cup that those assembled might receive of them. Even if at a Sunday celebration the eucharistic sacrament is shared, one is not celebrating the Eucharist. For the Eucharist is not only sacramental communion with Christ's body. It presumes the echoing of Christ's words and actions by the bishop or the priest, thereby enabling the Church to make present anew Christ's gift of himself to the Father and to be one with him in his action.

The Priest's Ministry is Lacking

19. The Church, the People of God, has as its Head the Christ who brings it together through the strength of his Spirit. The Sunday eucharistic assembly is the premier visible sign of this great mystery. The bishop or priest who presides at the eucharistic gathering signifies the presence of Christ the Head and of his Body, the Church. Priest and bishop, by virtue of ordination, also represent the bond of communion between this assembly and the local and universal Church. Because Sunday celebrations of the Word take place in the absence of bishop and priest they lack one of the sacramental signs of Christ's presence and of that communion which is a mark of his Church.

20. A deacon has as his liturgical ministry to proclaim the Gospel and to direct the Church's prayer. When he is called upon to preside at a Sunday celebration of the Word, it is in consequence of the ministry given him by ordination. Although the homily is normally the ministry of the bishop or priest who presides at the proclamation of the Word, a deacon may give the homily when a priest or bishop is absent.

21. The lay person who leads Sunday worship has not the sacramental ordination empowering him or her to preside over the building up of the Church and its gathering together. Instead, such lay persons serve their baptized sisters and brothers in virtue of the mission given them in the sacraments of Christian initiation. When ordained ministers are unavailable, lay persons who preside may preach or lead a reflection on the Word of God, provided they have been authorized to do this by the bishop.18

It Can Give Rise to Confusion

22. Obviously something so new to most of the Church can lead to misunderstanding. Some would wonder whether this practice was not a significant

17 Lumen Gentium, no. 29

18 Code of Canon Law, canon 766; see also Decree no. 6 of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 23 October 1984. This decree provides that the diocesan bishop may permit lay persons to preach in such situations.
move from our tradition as a Eucharistic Church toward a Church of the Word. Others would question whether by having other Sunday celebrations "in parallel" to the Mass, the Eucharist and the priesthood are not thereby devalued. For those more directly involved, there can be further areas of confusion. Although Catholics may readily understand that such celebrations and the Eucharist are "technically" different, they may have difficulty in appreciating the effective difference when what is for them the fullest mode of participation in the Eucharist, that is, the reception of communion, takes place in both. In terms of ministries, there is always a danger that the ordained priesthood, when it is not actively involved in the day-to-day pastoring of the community, may be perceived as an intrusion in terms of the lay ministries in place. The reverse, too, is possible. Finally, there can be confusion about the status of communities; are those which are unable to celebrate regularly the Sunday Eucharist somehow second-class to those which do? It is because the possibilities for misunderstanding are so present in this situation that the greatest care must be taken in its implementation.

Pastoral Notes

Who Makes the Decisions?

23. In keeping with the Directory (no. 24), "It belongs to the diocesan bishop, after hearing the council of presbyters, to decide whether Sunday assemblies without the celebration of the Eucharist should be held on a regular basis in his diocese. It belongs also to the bishop, after considering the place and persons involved, to set out both general and particular norms for such celebrations. These assemblies are therefore to be conducted only in virtue of their convocation by the bishop and only under the pastoral ministry of the parish priest (pastor)."

Before Deciding

24. Before arriving at a decision, the bishop and his advisers ought to take account of the places of worship within the diocese, the number of eucharistic celebrations in each of the parishes, the possibility of cooperation among the priests of a given area, and the geographic and demographic factors involved. They would need to be aware of the people in such areas capable of leading their Sunday assemblies, and how they might be provided with the necessary resources. Further, they would want to avoid that in the same place there would occur both the celebration of the Eucharist and a Sunday celebration of the Word for the same Sunday (Directory, no. 21).

Once a Decision Has Been Made

25. An appropriate catechesis should be given to the faithful of the parish before such a practice begins (Directory, no. 26). This might be done by way

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Chapter 2 of the Directory deals with many of these issues.
of pastoral letters, the parish bulletin, through workshops and special meetings of the community, or through other means of communication appropriate to the particular situation.

26. The catechetical component of preparation should point out the differences between the two types of the Sunday assembly, especially as it deals with the presider and the nature of the liturgy in each case. It is important that such explanations should be clear enough to eliminate any misunderstanding or confusion (Directory, no. 22). The overall information given to the people to prepare them for this reality should present this new practice in a balanced manner. The faithful can be helped to see its importance and its value without its drawbacks being minimized. Its character as a celebration “in anticipation of the celebration of the Eucharist” obviously deserves particular attention.

27. It will also be essential to provide proper formation for those called to provide a service to the Church in leading these assemblies. Such persons should be aware of the character of a non-eucharistic Sunday celebration, of its structure as distinct from the celebration of the Eucharist, and of the particular role which is theirs. In this way, their words, gestures and demeanor will be tailored to the concrete circumstances and will not engender confusion either as to the nature of the celebration or their own ministry within the Church. Proper liturgical formation for those who lead the Sunday assembly would seek to provide them with the competency and the confidence they require. Indeed it would be preferable if teams of people – presiders, musicians, readers, communion ministers – were prepared together, since in this way a variety of ministries may best be encouraged and the nature of these assemblies as celebrations of the whole Christian community may be made more evident.

The Form of Celebration

28. Two forms of liturgical gathering are proposed by the Directory: celebration of the Liturgy of the Word, and celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours. Similar to one another because of their scriptural content, each of these celebrations of the Word has distinctive features. The Liturgy of the Word celebrates in a preeminent way the unfolding mystery of Christ and salvation as this is recalled in a structured manner during the course of the liturgical year. Its principal elements are organized in a manner similar to the liturgy of the Word which forms the first part of the eucharistic celebration, although the two are not identical; these features focus the assembly on the mystery of salvation realized in Christ and lived out by the Church. The Liturgy of the Hours is also a celebration of God’s Word, but above all it calls the community to praise and wonder. It draws upon the treasury of hymns and psalms which has preserved the content of the traditional prayer of our ancestors in faith.

With or Without Communion?

29. Vatican II recalled the importance, for “that more complete form of participation in the Mass,” of receiving the Body of the Lord from the same eucharistic celebration, for it is both sacrifice and banquet.20 The instruction on the wor-

20 Sacrosanctum Concilium, no. 55
ship of the Eucharist (1967) laid down an even more precise directive that the faithful should receive "hosts consecrated at the Mass," that communion may stand out more clearly, even through signs, as a participation in the sacrifice actually being celebrated.\textsuperscript{21} This ought to be the normal practice.

30. Does it follow that communion should not take place apart from the celebration of the Eucharist? Pastoral considerations certainly suggest a more cautious approach. The \textit{Directory} itself provides for communion, although it foresees celebrations without it, and it makes the important point that the faithful are called to gather on Sunday to hear God’s Word and to give thanks even when communion will not take place.\textsuperscript{22} Before deciding as a practice to have or not to have communion during the Sunday celebrations of the Word, the effects of this on the life and outlook of the community would need careful evaluation.

31. Those involved in the preparation of these celebrations, as well as the local pastor, will have to reflect on the repercussions of a decision one way or the other. A practice varied according to time and circumstances, and carefully presented through an appropriate catechesis, may be preferable to a decision made once and for all either for or against sharing communion within the framework of such celebrations. It is important that the community itself be encouraged to reflect upon the important theological, liturgical and pastoral considerations involved in this decision.

By Comparison/Contrast with the Eucharist

The Connection

32. At the beginning of each Sunday celebration of the Word, it would seem fitting to call to mind the link with celebrations of the Eucharist taking place elsewhere, or with the last celebration of the Eucharist to have taken place in this community. It is in union with these eucharistic assemblies that the local community prepares to give thanks to the Father for the salvation made its own by Christ’s dying and rising.

33. The scripture readings proclaimed are those from the liturgical cycle. Thus the faithful are fed at the same table of the Word as their brothers and sisters who take part in the celebration of the Eucharist on the same day.

34. When the distribution of communion takes place, the blessed sacrament should be formally brought into the assembly. A person designated at a Eucharistic celebration in another place might bring the ciborium from there and place it on the altar. A second possibility is that the ciborium be clearly seen to be brought from the tabernacle to the altar before the members of the community are invited to come to share the Bread of Life. In these ways the communion ministers indicate that they are sharing in a prior celebration of the Eucharist in which Christ became present sacramentally to his Church. By the bringing of the blessed sacrament to the altar and by a suitable introduction, the community will understand that their communion procession is always a

\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Eucharisticum Mysterium} (Instruction on the worship of the Eucharist, 25 May 1967), no. 31; see also the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 56h.

\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Directory}, nos. 20, 32, 35
participation in the celebration of the Eucharist of an assembly previously gathered and is directed always to the communion of the Church itself.

The Differences

35. Those who prepare these Sunday celebrations of the Word will recognize that the rite is far from identical to the way in which the celebration of Mass takes place. Of the two forms suggested, that of the Liturgy of the Hours more clearly indicates the distinctive nature of this gathering.

36. On the other hand, a Liturgy of the Word in which the biblical texts are proclaimed in the usual order of Sunday worship is more familiar to the assembly. In this form, fellowship with other Christians who are gathered on this same day to celebrate the Eucharist becomes more tangible. As a general principle, to have Sunday celebrations from time to time according to each of the two approved forms will both help to avoid routine and provide the experience of different ways of giving thanks to the Lord.

37. Whatever the form chosen, the preparation of the gifts is always omitted, and the prayer of thanksgiving is always found at a place other than that which is usual for the eucharistic prayer. Further, it should have neither the structure nor the content of the eucharistic prayer; the epiclesis, and the institution narrative are never used. If there is communion, the breaking of the bread and its accompanying chant, "Lamb of God...", are omitted, and communion is given from the reserved sacrament or brought from a celebration of the Eucharist elsewhere, and only under the form of bread.

38. It should be added further that the increase in Sunday celebrations of the Word places a new and serious obligation upon those responsible for celebrations for the Eucharist to see that those rites proper to the Eucharist are observed with great emphasis and dignity. These distinctive elements include the preparation of the gifts, the eucharistic prayer, the breaking of the bread and its chant, communion under both forms, and communion from the sacrament consecrated at the same celebration. No less than those who plan Sunday celebrations of the Word, those who prepare eucharistic celebrations must ensure also that the differences between the two are clearly recognized and understood by the community.

39. A further major difference between a Sunday celebration of the Word and a celebration of the Eucharist is the ministerial status of those who lead them. Only a bishop or a priest can preside at the Eucharist. In most cases it will be lay persons who conduct Sunday celebrations of the Word. They act in virtue of their baptism and confirmation, and have been delegated to serve in the absence of a priest, not to replace him. Of course a deacon who fulfills this function acts not by delegation, but in virtue of his own ministry.

40. The non-ordained who lead such celebrations do not use the usual place of the presider at Eucharist. They lead from another place appropriate to the nature of the service they are performing, but also to the nature of this assembly and to their ministry within the Church. Thus the usual presidential chair, a symbol of the ministry of the bishop or priest, would remain empty.23 It is still important to find a place from which a lay presider can effectively lead the

23 Directory, no. 40; Book of Blessings, nos. 880-881
prayer of the assembly, while indicating, even in terms of physical set-up, that the presider gives thanks to the Lord in union with the assembly. A place in the front of the church, in full view, perhaps closer to the ambo than to the altar, would seem appropriate.

41. Lay presiders greet the assembly and invoke God's blessing using the first person plural. They could take a seat in the assembly to listen to the biblical readings or to take part in the singing of the psalms, since these may be led from the ambo by other ministers.

42. The presider would come to the ambo to lead the reflection which follows the proclamation of the readings or to deliver a text prepared by the priest who serves the community. Alternatively, another person may be designated to do these things.

43. The dismissal takes place from the place chosen to lead the assembly, with the use of the form "Let us go in the peace of Christ," or a similar formula.

44. A deacon should use the usual deacon's chair, if there is one, but may preside from the area used by the ordained presider. A deacon would use the usual formulas proper to the ordained ministry.

45. The Directory (no. 40) leaves it to the bishop to decide upon the form of vesture for the lay person who leads the Sunday celebration of the Word. When deacons are called to preside, they wear the vestments proper to their ministry – the alb and stole.

(Editor's note: This document is also being published in French.)
Imagine yourself participating in the following liturgy.

Time and Place

- Liturgical season: The second Sunday of Advent.
- Church: The cathedral of Salzburg, Austria (for which Mozart wrote so much music).
- Time of day: The 10 am eucharist.

Climate

- Temperature outside: Minus 17 degrees Celsius (zero degrees Fahrenheit). Austria and southern Germany were experiencing their coldest weather in about 110 years.
- Temperature inside: Minus 17 degrees Celsius (or perhaps a few degrees warmer because of all the people). At least there was no wind inside.

The Music

- Claudio Monteverdi's Missa Ave Domine Jesu Christi was sung a capella from the back loft by a well trained choir of about 20 men and women. They were heavily bundled up in warm coats, scarves and gloves; women wore hats. This did not seem to impede their singing.
- A small schola of four men sang the introit, preparation and communion antiphons from a platform extending out from one of the pillars toward the front. They wore overcoats, scarves and gloves, and their breath was visible.
- The organ was played at the beginning and end, after the first reading, and a brief intermezzo between the Sanctus and Benedictus. The organist was well bundled up as well.
- The congregation sang a gospel alleluia, their part of the preface dialogue, the memorial acclamation, Lord’s Prayer, and a hymn at the end.
- The presider sang the opening prayer and the preface.

The People

- Many arrived 45 minutes early to sit near the front. By the time Mass started the cathedral was full, and almost as many stood as had seats. Of course everyone was warmly dressed and sat or stood close together for warmth. Participation was good.

The Ministers

- The presider wore an old fashioned type of chasuble, plus a red biretta (monsignor? bishop?). There was a deacon and a preacher. Two young men served as acolytes, and another seemed to act as master of ceremonies; per-
haps they were seminarians. It was not obvious that they were wearing warm clothing under their vestments.

The Liturgy

• To their credit, neither the presider nor the preacher rushed at all. The presider welcomed people and introduced the liturgy at some length, and also spoke just before the blessing. The homily lasted about 20 minutes, and the entire liturgy took an hour and a half.

• The Year

When did this take place? Not during Monteverdi's lifetime (1567-1643), nor that of Mozart (1756-1791). Rather, it was December 1991. On a previous visit to Salzburg, the editor and his wife had found some heating in that cathedral, but there certainly was none on this visit.

Reflection

This experience made us ask a number of questions:

• How did our ancestors in the faith worship in winter in northern climes — whether in Europe or North America?

• What is the history of heating in churches? In different parts of the world? In different traditions? In large church buildings and small buildings?

• At a more general level, in what ways, if at all, did climate influence church architecture?

• What effect did cold weather have on the roles of the presider, preacher, and other ministers? On the participation of the laity? Was cold weather a factor in decreased lay participation? Or did the use of heavy clothing by everyone affect how or how well people could participate?

Many answers are undoubtedly lost in the mists of time. However, older liturgical books and commentaries tell us that winter and its cold weather did affect the liturgy, that people were well aware of this and made explicit accommodations and adaptations. Some of the evidence follows.

Eucharist

The missal used between 1570 and 1970 contained the following provisions in its section on "Defects in the Celebration of Mass".

If, by accident (e.g., because the celebrant's hands were numb from cold) a part of the sacred host should slip into the precious blood, the celebrant continues mass and performs the actions with the remaining part of the host, if this can be conveniently done.... (X.10)

If, in winter, in a very cold climate, the precious blood should freeze in the chalice, hot cloths should be wrapped around it to thaw the consecrated wine. If this does not succeed, the chalice should be plunged into hot
water (taking care that none gets into it) near the altar, or held close to the fire, if this be feasible, until the contents thaw. (X.11)

Baptism

Not ice and snow: Theologians and liturgies prior to Vatican Council II were clear that ice should not be used for baptism, as one could not be washed in it; snow likewise was not to be used. Commentators did allow that ice and snow might be used in case of serious necessity, but there was some doubt about the validity of such baptisms.

The Roman Ritual of 1614 contained the following rubric:

If the water has frozen it should be thawed. But if it is partly frozen or too cold a smaller quantity of unblessed warm water may be mixed with some baptismal water in a special container, and this tepid mixture used in baptizing, thereby preventing injury to the infant. (no. 7)

Melt the ice: One commentator implied that the priest might also take ice from the font, let the warmth of his hands melt it a little, and baptize the child with those drops.

Immersion not required: A late medieval ritual from Konstanz (Constance) in southern Germany stated that it was not necessary to baptize children by immersion if the winter was very cold. In addition, the introductory rites at the door of the church could be abbreviated; indeed the admonitions addressed to the godparents could be omitted and the child need not be undressed.

Vestments

Keeping warm: We might expect that vestments would also reflect the climate. One writer explains:

In cold climates the wide-sleeved surplice was adopted. At the time when church heating was unheard of the clergy wore a furry robe which was called pelliceum [this was a fur-lined cassock]. The choir dress was usually large enough to cover the fur, whence the name super pelliceum (superpelisse) corrupted to surplice.

Choir dress was usually completed by a woolen garment which covers the upper part of the body, the shoulders and the head and is known by

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2 James O'Kane, Notes on the Rubrics of the Roman Ritual (New York: P. O'Shea 1883) 57-58
5 See note 2
6 Alban Dold, Die Konstanzer Ritualientexte in ihrer Entwicklung von 1482-1721 (Munster i. Westf: Verlag der Aschendorffschen Verlagsbuchhandlung 1923) 13, 35
the name of almuce, mozzetta or cape. These three forms certainly derive from the choir cope or cappa, a large mantle worn by most canons in wintertime. In olden days as there was little or no heating of churches and both the day and night offices were very long, it was not possible to remain in the stalls without being warmly clad in wool. The cappa which was often fur-lined was prescribed for all clerics or canons....

Janet Mayo agrees: "The name 'surplice' comes from 'super-pellicea' as it replaced the alb which was too slim a garment to fit over the fur-lined cassock which had come to be used in the colder climates of the north." The almuce "was widely worn in English and northern Europe and was a hood of fur, worn by canons and other dignitaries in the choir as a defense against the cold." The

In addition, bishops wore gloves for at least part of the liturgy.

Other Accommodations

Silver apples: There were other ways of keeping one's hands warm as well. In medieval England hollow metal balls made of copper or, more commonly, silver, "were so contrived that the hollow inside might be safely filled either with burning charcoal or hot water, if not indeed with some chemical preparation apt to give out heat for a length of time". These were called "silver apples". Daniel Rock states, "One of these warming balls, the bishop, at those parts of the Mass and the other portions of the divine service when he could becomingly do so, as he was sitting down, used to hold within both his hands and thus easily chafe them."

Hot coals: At Dorchester Abbey, near Oxford, England, there is "an unusual opening...which has a blocked-up flue. This may have been used...for warming the hands of the celebrant on a winter's morning before going to the altar." Curtains: Finally, even today, visitors to English cathedrals are conscious of the curtains and awnings around the choir stalls. They seem to exist to protect the singers and canons from drafts.

Closer to home, and at the present time, one hears that some rural churches in Quebec are closed during the winter because it is too difficult and too expensive to heat them; people go to one central church in each region.

What stories our ancestors could tell! And how fortunate we are today!

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9 Daniel Rock, The Church of our Fathers as Seen in St. Osmund's Rite for the Cathedral of Salisbury (London: C. Dolman 1849) vol. II, 163-164
10 Dorchester Abbey (St. Ives: Photo Precision Ltd. 1981) 5

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Questions about First Communion

We quite rightly take much time and effort to prepare children who were baptized as infants for their first holy communion around age seven. At the same time we need to re-examine our present discipline regarding first communion. Pastors and scholars are raising serious questions regarding the age of first communion and its relationship to baptism and to confirmation. Here are a few of the questions that are being discussed and some of the reasons why some think that infants, as well as adults, should be fully initiated in a rite that includes baptism, confirmation and first communion.

History

At baptism: For the first twelve centuries of the life of the church, until the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, children received holy communion at the time of their baptism and from then on. Often they received consecrated wine alone while they were nursing, and then consecrated bread as well when they began to take solid food. This practice was universally accepted and considered to be entirely normal; it is still the custom among Eastern Christians.

Delay: The practice of delaying first communion until about age seven began with the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. Why these bishops made this change is not fully known to us, but several contributing factors can be suggested.

Infrequent communion: At that time it was uncommon for lay people to receive communion at Mass. We know this because the same council felt it had to decree by law that everyone should receive communion at least once a year: the so-called Easter duty. From our vantage point today, this period in history had a very strange view of the eucharistic liturgy.

Visual adoration: In addition, the eucharist was experienced and understood at that time more as an object than as an action. It was around this time that the feast of Corpus Christi was instituted, with its procession with the consecrated host. The practice of elevating the consecrated host at the consecration also began at this time. Thus eucharistic devotion was centered on looking at the consecrated host, but not receiving it in communion.

1 An excellent survey of the history of this subject is provided by Matthew M. Crotty, The Recipient of First Holy Communion: A Historical Synopsis and Commentary (Canon Law Studies 247) (Washington: Catholic University of America Press 1947).
Intellectual approach: Finally, scholastic theology, which was beginning to develop at this time, took an intellectual, rather than experiential, approach to faith.

Age of Reason

Discernment: The practice of separating first holy communion from infant baptism was of course associated with the well-known concept of "age of reason" or "age of discretion." At different times and places between 1215 and the present, this age was considered to range between seven and fourteen years. Today the basis for this concept is in serious question because of our increased knowledge of child development.

What was it that children were supposed to be able to do or know at the age of reason that they did not do or know previously? Different theologians had their own ideas regarding this. One rather common set of criteria included the ability to distinguish the eucharistic bread from common bread, knowing something about God as a supernatural Being, knowing something about the supernatural destiny of human beings, appreciating that God rewards the good and punishes the wicked, and knowing something about the Trinity and the Incarnation.

Not eucharistic theology: It is of interest that these theologians did not require a knowledge of eucharistic theology or an understanding of the real presence of Christ. Rather, it was simply some appreciation that there was something about the eucharistic bread that made it different than ordinary bread. Our experience today is that children much younger than seven years – and certainly much younger than fourteen – can have such appreciation.

What is faith? Some of the implications of the concept of age of reason or age of discretion are questionable as well. For example, it implies an intellectual understanding of faith, in contrast with faith as a personal relationship with God. What counts is our learning – our knowledge about God – rather than our relationship with God.

Children were also considered to be "mini-adults"; the concept of childhood is quite recent.

Baptism: The connection between baptism and eucharist was quite weak. One had to be baptized in order to receive first communion, but there was no idea of Christian initiation as a whole, and the theological links between baptism and eucharist were poorly understood.

Ministry and participation: Children were purely the recipients of ministry, and did not have any ministerial role themselves. There was no sense of celebration nor of participation. (This of course was true for all lay persons in the medieval and post-tridentine period, not just children.)
Children in the Church

**Today we have a different appreciation** of children and their role in the liturgy of the church. David Holeton, a Canadian Anglican scholar who has written extensively on this subject, makes the following remarks:

Why...does Jesus take a child and set him before the disciples as the model for those who would inherit the Kingdom? For, if we are to take Jesus seriously in this matter, mere, unreconstructed, adults have no hope of entering the Kingdom.

In making a child the model of the inheritor of the Kingdom, Jesus was acting in a fashion that broke with contemporary Jewish thought. For in the tradition which Jesus inherited, children were not important in what they were, but in what they were to become – the promise of a future for Israel. Jesus, however, makes the child important for qualities that are already present, qualities which we tend to unlearn as we grow older, qualities such as a sense of mystery and wonder, a sense of dependence, the unashamed ability to receive, a natural faith or trust, and effervescent joy.

It is impossible to spend very much time with a child without becoming acutely aware that children are often sensitive to the awesome mystery of the divine in a way in which it has become quite casual to us. I am reminded of this repeatedly by looking into the faces of young communicants. As adults, we are only too ready to explain mystery away, taking Christ's self-giving in the Eucharist simply as the natural order of things.

Augustine suggested that the child was the ideal communicant because it images perfectly the helplessness of the human condition. We must come to God with the same helpless abandon as an infant does to its mother. We need to unlearn some of the self-assuredness we have come to assume in our relationship with God.

Just as, I suspect, none of us has encountered a child who is an embarrassed receiver muttering “Oh, you shouldn’t have!” or “You needn’t have bothered!” when being presented with a gift, Christian adults need to learn what it is to be receivers of God's gifts offered freely and unmerited. Children are perfect receivers.

Those who work in early childhood development tell us that children are trusting until they learn not to trust. In a world in which we adults, particularly those of us who live in urban environments, have learned not to trust others, the natural trust of children models for us the true nature of the relationship we are to have with God: a relationship in which our mecha-
nisms for self-defense must be laid aside and our final attitude to God becomes that of trust.

As adults, we spend much time and energy keeping our emotions under control,...[and] we spend more time controlling the emotions of anger and impatience than the other range of emotions. Children spend more time controlling their emotions of joy. The joy of children is something we have all experienced as infectious; does it not, perhaps, model for us the joy and delight of the saints in God's Kingdom?

Paul tells us that in Christ "there is no such thing as Jew and Greek, slave and freeman, male and female" (Galatians 3:28) for we are all one person in Jesus Christ. I would like to suggest that age and intellectual achievement are also potential human barriers that are also overturned in Christ. For in his Kingdom all the barriers we erect to keep us apart from one another: gender, race, class, social status, age or intellectual achievement are all abolished and we are made one in him. Finding young children receiving communion in our midst is a lively reminder of that reality.

Exclusion and Alienation

What consequences? The pastors and scholars who are raising questions about our present practice of first communion also ask about the consequences of excluding children from full participation in the Sunday eucharistic liturgy in their early years. What influence might this have on the loss of teenagers from the church? Do small children feel a sense of rejection and alienation, and do they act upon this when they become older and more independent?

An inclusive church? In view of the principle of full, active, conscious and fruitful participation of all the baptized in the liturgy that was enunciated by Vatican Council II, how can we exclude certain baptized members - and indeed, the weakest and most vulnerable members - of the church from holy communion? Is our present practice of first communion compatible with contemporary views of an inclusive church?

Children in the Home

Eating at home: Analogies are also drawn between the place of children in the church (with respect to the discipline of first communion) and the place of children in our homes. A child born into a human family eats and drinks with the family from the very beginning. At first she nurses or drinks from a bottle, then sits at the table eating baby food, and eventually eats what the rest of the family eats, even if mashed or cut up. In due course she learns table manners and eats as adults do.

Not allowed to eat: By analogy, delaying first communion until the age of reason would be like not allowing a child to eat at all until she can handle knife, fork and spoon in an adult way; until she knows all about table manners; until she knows about basic principles of nutrition. Is this a good model of church?
Baptism: Our present approach to first communion also tells us that baptism is really not all that important. It does not seem really to confer membership in the church. Baptized infants and small children in fact remain on the fringe of the church – if they cannot commune, their membership seems marginal or partial. They are excluded from the table – from the central act of Christian worship.

Poor practices: The practice of delaying first communion until at least age seven originated in an age when the eucharistic prayer belonged to the priest alone; the laity did not – could not – participate in the eucharistic prayer in any way except by looking at the elevated bread and cup. It comes from a time when the procession of gifts had largely disappeared, hence laity no longer provided the bread and wine. It comes from a time when lay persons rarely received holy communion at all.

Today we would view the practice and understanding of eucharist held in the thirteenth century as terribly deficient. We have rejected most of the practices described above; why do we cling to that period’s view of children and of first communion?

Not a unity: Our practice of first communion also implies that it is alright to divide up the eucharistic liturgy into pieces; that it is not really a unity, not an integral whole. Children can participate (at least visually) in the preparation of the gifts and altar and in the eucharistic prayer, but not in communion.

The eucharist is a whole, it is an action with its own integrity; it is not an object (even a holy object). It is a unity, not a series of acts from which we may choose this or that. The whole eucharist is for the whole church.

Discussion needed: Let us discuss our present practice of first communion at parish and diocesan levels, in homes, schools and parish communities. What feelings, experiences and understandings support the present practice of delaying first communion? On what are these based? What does the best contemporary theology have to say about them?
ICEL's Third Progress Report – Continued

Ordinary of the Mass: One section of ICEL's *Third Progress Report on the Revision of the Roman Missal* has to do with texts such as the Creeds, Glory to God, Holy, holy, Lamb of God, etc. Press reports of some proposed changes in these texts often were quite distorted: they tended to give the impression that there would be many changes (which is not correct), and tended to give the impression that the Catholic Church was alone in making such changes (also not correct).

Ecumenical: The fact is that since the early 1970s, these texts have been dealt with ecumenically, first through a group called the International Consultation on English Texts (ICET) and more recently by the English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLCC). The recent revisions recommended by the latter body are thus directed to all the English-speaking churches that have been using these common texts, and they are deliberately minimal – though not unimportant.

The following quotation from ICEL's *Third Progress Report* is taken from its section entitled "ELLCC Texts."

The translations of several of the texts in the Order of Mass approved for use in the English-speaking conferences of bishops were prepared by the International Consultation on English Texts (ICET). This international ecumenical body was formed in 1969 with the purpose of providing ecumenically acceptable translations of texts that are used in common by the Churches in their liturgies. ICEL provided the Roman Catholic participation in ICET.

The ICET texts, as they came to be called, were eventually published in successive editions of *Prayers We Have in Common* (1970, 1972, and 1975) by Fortress Press in the United States and SPCK in Great Britain. The texts of the Order of Mass in question are: The Lord's Prayer, the Nicene Creed, the Apostles' Creed, Kyrie, Gloria in Excelsis, Sursum Corda, Sanctus and Benedictus, and the Agnus Dei. As the ICET texts went through the several editions some were revised, the final versions appearing in the 1975 edition of *Prayers We Have In Common*. The several editions of the texts account for the fact that these texts as used in the English-speaking conferences of bishops vary slightly at several points, the Nicene Creed in particular. This slight diversity was the result of several conferences adopting the 1970 or 1972 edition of the ICET texts and the other conferences approving the final edition of 1975. The ICET texts have been in use by the conferences for nearly twenty ears. ICEL completed its work with the publication in 1975 of the final edition of its texts.

In 1985 the English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC) was formed as the successor body to ICET, but with a somewhat broader agenda. ICEL provides the Roman Catholic participation in ELLC at the international level. Nearly forty churches throughout the English-speaking world take part in the work of ELLC through the other member associations: The Australian Consultation on Liturgy, the Canadian Churches’ Coordinating Group on Worship, the Consultation on Common Texts of North America, the Joint Liturgical Consultation in New Zealand, the Joint Liturgical Group of Great Britain, and the Liturgical Committee of the South African Church Unity Commission.

The first task of ELLC was the revision of the ICET texts in light of more than a decade of use by the Churches. To this end consultations were held in 1985 and 1986 with the Churches participating in the work of ELLC. Roman Catholic comment was solicited by ICEL through the national liturgical commissions of the member and associate member conferences of ICEL. The work of revision was carried out over three years, during which there was a further consultation on proposed initial revisions of the texts. The revised texts were published in 1990 in a booklet entitled Praying Together (by the Canterbury Press Norwich in England and Abingdon Press in the United States). Extensive notes were published with the texts. These notes were an expanded and fully revised form of the notes that had appeared in Prayers We Have in Common.

The ELLC principles for revision of the ICET texts were restrained, in view of the fact that the Churches throughout the world had officially adopted these texts and had been using them in public worship for some years. The principles were as follows.

1. In order to avoid pastoral disruption, only necessary changes should be made.

2. Sensitivity should be shown to the need for inclusive language.

3. The revision should be made bearing in mind that these texts are for use in the liturgical assembly. The ease with which they can be said, heard, and sung is an essential element of the revision.

4. The revision should use language that is contemporary and suited to the present version of the ICET texts.

The ELLC (revised ICET) texts are now being reviewed and adopted by Churches throughout the world.

Notes on two ICET/ELLC texts used in every eucharistic liturgy are reproduced, with permission, from Praying Together. These show how the process of translation and revision of these texts has proceeded. In addition, these notes help us understand more deeply liturgical texts that, because they are used so frequently, may not receive the attention they deserve.

Preface Dialogue

1 The Lord be with you.

2 And also with you.
3 Lift up your hearts.
4 We lift them [up] to the Lord.
5 Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
6 It is right to give our thanks and praise.

In the eucharistic liturgy, this dialogue between the president and the congregation is found as early as the third century in the West (Hippolytus, ca. 215, and Cyprian, ca. 252) and the fourth century in the East (Cyril of Jerusalem, ca. 350). Its universality shows that it developed from a dialogue at Jewish ritual meals where the grace or thanksgiving after the main meal was introduced by the president's saying "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God" and the gathered company giving their assent. In the Eucharist the dialogue leads into the great thanksgiving, which traditionally begins with a preface culminating in the Sanctus. Some early liturgies amplify the simple dialogue or substitute "minds" or "hearts and minds" for "hearts."

Lines 1 to 2. This couplet could well have appeared as a separate entry under the title Dominus vobiscum. Its use as a liturgical and even personal, greeting may well be older than Christianity (compare Ruth 2:4 and 2 Timothy 4:22). The ICET version of it, reproduced above, has found widespread acceptance. When it first appeared, a number regretted the loss of any reference to "spirit" in the reply and would have preferred "and with your spirit." Some even saw a reference to the gift of the Spirit given in ordination. It is much more likely that the expression "your spirit" is based on a semitic equivalent to "yourself" and that the ICET text accurately conveys the intended meaning.

By translating Dominus in the greeting literally as "Lord," the Consultation avoided the question whether the reference is to God, to Christ, or to the Holy Spirit, as different scholars have thought. Then there is the question of supplying a verb in English. Should it be the indicative "is" of declaration or the subjective "be" of wishing? In the original ancient languages no verb was needed in this kind of sentence. Comparison with the explicit subjunctive of Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum ("The peace of the Lord be always with you") and the greetings in 1 Corinthians 16:23 and 2 Corinthians 13:13 suggest that the traditional "be" should be retained.

Lines 3-4. The Consultation noted that "up" is still in widespread use in the reply (line 4), and is preferred by many because it echoes the greeting of line 3. It also observed that it does not correspond to any word in the original, which would be translated literally as "We have them with the Lord." That is to say, the metaphorical "up" of the greeting is not repeated in the reply but is explained as "with the Lord." The Consultation resolved to reaffirm the ICET text which has proved in practice to be suitable for singing and which places the emphasis on "the Lord" rather than on an adverb.

ICEL's Third Progress Report adds:

The ICET text for line 4 was "We lift them to the Lord." This has been retained by the English Language Liturgical Consultation in its review of the ICET texts. The line as reprinted [in ICEl proposed revised texts] reads "We lift them up to the Lord." This is the form in which the ICET text was presented by ICEl to the conferences of bishops, and it is the form which the conferences approved. ICEl decided to retain the "up."
Lines 5 to 6. The eucharistic prayer which follows is essentially an act of praise and thanksgiving to the Father. Following the basic Jewish prayer form, the Christian liturgies blessed God by giving thanks and praise. Gratias aga­mus represents this underlying Hebrew concept and is therefore properly expressed, first by “Let us give thanks,” and more fully by “It is right to give our thanks and praise.”

The original assent in Greek and Latin is literally “It is right and just,” which seems rather curt in English. Any reference to God thus depends on the context and is an addition to the terse Latin or Greek. The addition of “our thanks and praise” at the end of the line emphasizes the main thought and leads well into the great thanksgiving.

There are two changes in these lines from the ICET text as printed in 1975. “Our” in line 5 has been given a lower-case “o” in correction of an oversight or printing error. In line 6 “him” has been replaced by “our.” Various alternatives to “him” were considered, including “all,” “such,” and “great.” “Offer” was also considered as a replacement for “give” if the pronoun was deleted. The Consultation believed it important not to alter the rhythm of the line unnecessarily. The rendering “It is right to give God thanks and praise” was also considered. In the end, “to give our thanks” was chosen as reflecting “Let us give thanks” in the previous line. The context makes it clear that the thanks and praise are being given to God.

Sanctus and Benedictus

1 Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
2 heaven and earth are full of your glory.
3 Hosanna in the highest.

4 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
5 Hosanna in the highest.

Recent scholarship suggests that the Sanctus or angelic hymn first entered the eucharistic prayer in the East. The earliest references are from East Syria, Cappadocia, and Jerusalem. It spread rapidly in both the East and the West. Its use no doubt arose from the thought that the worshipers who had lifted their hearts to the Lord were sharing in the worship of heaven.

The Sanctus (lines 1-3) sometimes appears without the Benedictus (lines 4-5) as in the Egyptian Liturgy of Serapion (fourth century) and The Book of Common Prayer of 1552 and 1662. Some liturgies have used the Benedictus but not in immediate conjunction with the Sanctus. A space has therefore been left between the two texts.

These texts are acclamations of praise based upon Scripture, but not exactly conforming to the texts of Isaiah 6:3 or Mark 11:9-10 respectively. At an early stage in the Church’s liturgical use the reference to “heaven” was added in line 2. Some early liturgies expand the text in other ways.

The version printed above accords with that proposed earlier by ICET. It has found general favor and there was little call to amend it.
Line 1. The punctuation of this line differs from that followed in most older versions and in the phrasing of older musical settings. The coupling of the words “holy Lord” without a comma results from treating line 1 as a vocative addressed to God rather than as a declaration with the verb understood (“Holy, holy, holy [is the] Lord, the God of hosts”). The latter follows the text of Isaiah, which continues: “The whole earth is full of his glory.”

For liturgical purposes, when the context is an offering of praise and thanksgiving of the Father, the conversion of “his” to “your” has been accepted for one-and-a-half millennia. The treatment of line 1 as an address of God seems equally appropriate. Some authority for this is the fact that the printed editions of the Missale Romanum, beginning at least in 1570, omit the comma between Sanctus and Dominus. The more common punctuation in English follows The Book of Common Prayer (“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts”) separating “holy” and “Lord” by a comma but not supplying the verb “is,” which is rightly added in most translations of the Bible.

Another problem for the translator lies in the Hebrew word Sabaoth, which means either “armies” or “heavenly hosts of angels.” The concept is rendered in the Greek of Revelation 4:8 as pantocrator, “the Almighty.” The common English translation of Sabaoth as “hosts” is open to misunderstanding, because of other associations of the word. Some people object to stressing the military metaphor which is certainly part of the original meaning. The translation “God of power and might” seems to satisfy the meaning of the text in Isaiah and to avoid misconceptions.

Line 3. The Book of Common Prayer paraphrased this line by “Glory be to thee, O Lord most high,” thus highlighting two problems: How should Hosanna be handled, and what is the best translation of in excelsis? The Consultation believed that Hosanna was one of the abiding links with Hebrew and Aramaic (like Amen and Hallelujah) that should continue in use in English, just as such words found themselves embedded in Greek and Latin liturgies. At the very least it expresses a cry of joyous welcome. Its literal meaning (“Save us!”) shows that it was an acclamation addressed to one who was being recognized as a Savior and deliverer. Recent studies indicate that Hosanna belongs to the Benedictus and was then added to the Sanctus at Easter and major festivals.

As in the Gloria in Excelsis...it was decided to adopt the familiar and joyous translation of in excelsis as “in the highest.” The whole line now has the same rhythm in English as in Latin.

Line 4. “Blessed.” This renders benedictus (a passive participle, corresponding to the Greek eulogetos) and not beatus (an adjective, corresponding to the Greek makarios). For this reason, many will prefer to pronounce, and perhaps to spell, the word as “blest.” It is also uncertain whether the verb to be supplied is “is” or “be.” The latter is perhaps more likely in an acclamation (compare “Blessed be God” and “Hallowed be your name”). The Consultation decided that no change should be made to an expression “Blessed is he” which has been found acceptable when proposed by ICET and is over four hundred years old.

The only point where there was some call for change was that “he who comes” should be altered to “the one who comes.” The quotation of Psalm 118:26a in the eucharistic celebration refers not to everyone who comes in God’s name but specifically to Jesus our Savior.
Obituary

Christiane Brusselmans

Christiane Brusselmans, noted catechist and promoter of the RCIA, died in November 1991. Raised in a village near Louvain (Leuven), Belgium, she studied theology at the renowned University of Louvain, at L'lnstitut Catholique in Paris, and at the Catholic University of America. At that time it was quite unusual for a lay woman to do graduate studies in theology. As an expert in the sacramental preparation of children, she spoke at workshops and congresses throughout the world.

Christiane participated in early experiments that were being carried out in Paris with the ancient process of catechumenate. When the renewed Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults was published in 1972, "she knew that the rites were more than a liturgical antique or a fancier way of welcoming converts.... The rites involved revolutionary notions of conversion, catechesis, church, liturgy, and sacraments." A woman of great energy, she promoted the RCIA throughout the world in many ways. In all her work, "she taught us how to retrieve the Catholic past and make it serve the needs of twentieth-century Christians."

Christiane Brusselmans has been called "The mother of Christian initiation." May she rest in peace.

Obituary

Mark Searle

Mark Searle, professor of liturgy at the University of Notre Dame and devoted husband and father, died in mid-August. Born and raised in Bristol, England, he carried out graduate studies in liturgy at San Anselmo in Rome and the Liturgical Institute in Trier, Germany. He joined the faculty at Notre Dame in 1977. In 1983 he was president of the North American Academy of Liturgy, and he contributed to the work of the ICEL Subcommittee on Translations and Original Texts for some years.

Mark's writings were very influential. He edited the Notre Dame publication, Assembly, for six years, wrote the important book, Christening: The Making of Christians (1980) as well as Liturgy Made Simple (1981), and contributed to Liturgy and Social Justice (1980) and the Baptism and Confirmation volume in the series, Alternative Futures in Worship (1987). In addition he wrote nearly 100 articles in Worship, Catechumenate, The Way, Commonweal, Assembly, Media Development, Church, Liturgy and elsewhere.

His ability to communicate complex ideas clearly and simply – though never simplistically – were a great gift to the church, and he spoke at many gatherings around the world. In 1990 he was the main presenter at the annual meeting of the Western Liturgical Conference in Edmonton, Alberta, where he spoke on the issues involved in the Christian initiation of children.

His wife Barbara and their three children were central not only in Mark's home life, but also influenced him as an academic liturgist. His concern for the initiation of children arose in part out of his experience with his own children, and they helped him know about children from close personal experience.

Mark Searle's contributions to the world of liturgy will be sorely missed. May he rest in peace.
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**1993 Sourcebook for Sundays and Seasons (Year A):** ISBN 0-929650-29-8, 215 pp, US $8.00 each. Compiled in the form of an almanac, this day by day planning guide gives background, ideas and texts for liturgical planning.

**1993 At Home with the Word (Year A):** ISBN 0-929650-31-X, 158 pp, US $5.95 each. Offers the Sunday Scriptures (RSV) and reflections for the liturgical year.

**Children's Daily Prayer for the School Year 1992-93:** ISBN 0-929650-58-1, 321 pp, US $15.00 each. Contains prayers for each day as well as lunchtime prayers and prayers to end the day.

**1993 Workbook for Lectors and Gospel Readers (Year A):** ISBN 0-929650-55-7, 174 pp, US $8.00 each. Although it contains the NAB text for Sundays, there are so many useful pointers and commentaries for each Sunday Reading.


An ecclesiology of Communion is at the heart of liturgical renewal as well as the entire vision of what it means to be Church. It has ramifications for the ecumenical dialogue and debates within many main-line traditions on the vision of Church and koinonia. J.-M. Tillard is a noted researcher, active in the ecumenical dialogue; his timely book focuses on the vision of Church as communion, rooted in Jesus Christ and his mission.

Each year, numerous seasonal booklets appear for youth and adult. Some lenten samples available from The Liturgical Press, St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, MN 56321-7500 are:


Daily reflections for the Easter Season.


On the 500th Anniversary of Christianity in the Americas, Reflections on the daily readings of the Eucharist.


This booklet is intended for unbaptized children of catechetical age to prepare for initiation with the help of a parent. Written for children between the ages of 5 and 13, the author examines the meaning of the various symbols, rites and prayers.


Two noted scholars have collaborated to offer this commentary on the document The Promise of His Glory of the Church of England. The commentary weaves together the feasts of light by hymnody, scripture and historical background.


Too often homilies are only doctrinal statements that are meant only for the mind. Faith is not only rational it is also life. The author seeks to help preachers appreciate and use images which create a cognitive and affective impact on the congregation.


Here is a collection of 35 stories based on Scripture and suitable for homilies. However, these are not dry stories, but wonderfully woven together by Bausch, which make for spiritual reading for everyone.


These two volumes on Early Christian initiation practices are part of the MESSAGE OF THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH series which is a companion series to THE OLD TESTAMENT and THE NEW TESTAMENT MESSAGE, which seeks to examine the formation of thought, life and worship of the early church. Volume 5 deals with the West and East Syrian traditions, and vol. 6 covers the Italian, North African and Egyptian traditions. The author provides in each volume a general introduction before examining the main sources of each tradition. In addition, the author provides large sections of the text of the sources in a good English translation. Although scholarly, the works are very readable.
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