Liturgies in the Home

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all who are involved in preparing, celebrating,
and improving the community's life of worship
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Liturgies in the Home
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The liturgical life of Christian children, women and men is not confined to the Sunday eucharist in the parish church. The parish itself provides regular eucharistic liturgies during the week, and hopefully, the liturgy of the hours as well. Weddings, funerals, the anointing of the sick, confirmation and other liturgies will be celebrated during the week as appropriate. The seasons of the liturgical calendar call for weekday as well as Sunday liturgies, and the saints of the calendar are celebrated mostly on weekdays.

This issue of the Bulletin, however, focuses on liturgical celebrations in homes and households. These are celebrations of the domestic church rather than of the parish church as a whole. Homes and households are of all kinds, of course: single persons of all ages, married couples young or old, and families with children. All are called to a life of prayer – every day, not just on Sunday. All are called to pray liturgically as well in other ways – every day as well as on Sunday.

Contemporary North American society does not support or encourage liturgical prayer in households. There are pressures of time: everyone is busy and has a different schedule; it is difficult for family members to spend time together. There are pressures from television, videos and computer games, radio, CDs, the internet – it is hard to be quiet. Spending time in prayer and ritual is not valued.

Prayer during the week in homes – including liturgical prayer – is a countercultural act and needs to be named as such. The prayer life of the domestic church needs the support and encouragement of the parish church and the diocesan church.

This issue of the Bulletin includes two articles on liturgical prayer in homes, written especially for those who are just getting started and are not entirely sure what to do and how to do it. They emphasize both simplicity and consistency. Resource lists remind us that this topic has been treated in a number of past issues of the Bulletin. Parish leaders, retreat centres and houses of prayer should try to make these and other resources available to our domestic churches.

Two other articles explore the frontier areas of liturgical inculturation among the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada, and our relationship with other religions. Both raise many questions as well as giving us the benefit of serious scholarly reflection. Finally, we consider some of the saints celebrated during the summer.

**Selected Resources**

The following issues of the Bulletin are still very helpful. Copies may be obtained from the Publications Service of the CCCB; see the inside front cover for further information.


The following are just a sampling of other resources. Further suggestions are given at the end of each article.

A Book of Blessings (Ottawa: Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1981)

Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers (Washington: Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1988)

Ashkar, Dominic F., Road to Emmaus: A New Model for Catechesis (San Jose: Resource Publications, 1993)


Grzanek, M. Grace, “Keeping Easter at Home,” Liturgy 90, vol. 26 (February/March 1995) 4-7, 15


Jesse Trees and other materials, often of the cut-out and color type, are available from Liturgy Training Publications, 1800 North Hermitage Avenue, Chicago IL 60622-1101, and from C. E. Visminas Co. Ltd., 812 Ivy Street, PO Box 10189, Pittsburgh, PA 15232. Write and ask for their catalogs.
With New Song and Festive Dance: Celebration and Ritual in the Home

Joan Halmo

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This article is reprinted, with permission, from Beginning the Journey: From Infant Baptism to First Eucharist (Washington: Department of Education, United States Catholic Conference 1994). The entire book is a fine resource.

The home has the unique ability to open the personal and familial dimensions of life to explicitly religious aspects.

Festivity and Ritual

The child walks with wonder among the ordinary things of life, pausing to delight in the things that adults often take for granted, stopping to discover and rejoice. Filled with fantasy and imagination, capable of continual and sustained amazement, the young child is at ease in the timeless world of festivity. Among children, there can be true festivity in every day, and in the moments within each day.

Appreciating and celebrating the moment as gift is a capability not highly prized in our day and in our society, for we are often part of a very complex lifestyle and absorbed by the world of daily care. For some, celebration could even be construed as a waste of time. It disrupts the ordinary routine and produces nothing of significance in terms of accomplishment. As the philosopher Josef Pieper writes, however, the rational, useful world that so holds our attention is but a practical environment for our humanity. Our human fulfillment lies in transcending the purely pragmatic, the visible and verifiable, in order to embrace the whole as marvellous gift. Encountering that gift, the mystery of

2 Josef Pieper, Leisure, the Basis of Culture (London: Faber and Faber 1963) 78
life, we can leave behind temporarily the workaday world of labor and practi-
cality and enter into the apparent uselessness of festivity, laughter, extrava-
gance, absence of calculation. Historically, this free and freeing space without
boundaries came to be called "holy day" — now, holiday. The true holiday is a
time that partakes of sacred timelessness and nourishes humanity through
companionship with the Divine, making us whole.

At the same time as unbounded horizons of celebration beckon to us, there is
another need that manifests itself: the yearning for the familiar, for structure
and order and the repetition of what is known. There is a "human need to
concur on a set of symbols and rituals that create order, give identity and
provide motivation." We assemble complexes of gestures and words and
invest them with meaning. We call them ritual. Repeated and perpetuated,
they become our tradition.

They serve to mark occasions large and small in our lives, from the passing of
days and nights, from hellos and good-byes, to births and birthdays and anni-
versaries, to goals achieved and life journeys ended. Making ritual is a
creative act. It is fundamental in human life, and it emerges as a phenomenon
in both the life of individuals and the social group.

Young children engage constantly in ritual, and they create their own or oblige
others to help them do so. We can witness this on the most ordinary level.
"Again, again, the same way," they say; or "I always keep it on this shelf"; or, to
the adult blithely reading aloud a familiar tale, "You missed a word in the
story!" Rather than being bored by what is predictable, children relish it, finding
there a sense of personal security and pleasure in the recurrence of some-
thing that seems ever as fascinating as if it had not happened before. Repe-
tition and familiarity, then, are an important need in the life of children. Indeed,
the discovery and creation of order are necessities of all human life and a
reflection of the first divine word in the book of Genesis, where God makes
order of darkness and chaos (cf. Genesis 1-2).

The Unique Contribution of the Home

In the home, events of family and daily life as well as the events of the greater
Christian family — the Church — and its liturgical time can be the occasion for
celebration and prayer. From the household's daily routines of rising, eating,
working, playing, and sleeping, to the Church's great days and seasons, the
household can take part in ritual that enriches and strengthens the individual
and the family. The home has the unique ability to open the personal and
familiar dimensions of life to explicitly religious aspects. A Christian family not
only marks birthdays and assorted anniversaries in a secular way, but blesses
God for the gift of life and for every passing year of grace. The Christian home

3 Gail Ramshaw Schmidt, "Readiness for Liturgy: The Formation of Christian Children."
Assembly, 9 (1982) 190

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provides the step that goes beyond gratitude and wonder in a general sense to the praise and thanks of God. One moves from the gift to the giver; one transcends the object by looking to and worshipping its Source. Spontaneous prayer or prayer forms derived from our tradition—biblical and liturgical—can articulate the Christian meaning of the event. Several fine books containing suggestions for prayer and ceremony on special family and personal occasions are available.

It is within the rhythm of daily living and within family relationships that we learn many of the gestures and rituals that are integral to the public worship we call liturgy. We come to know what it means to gather as community, to welcome, to forgive and be forgiven, to rejoice or mourn together, to thank, to assemble around a table to be nourished, to promise one another care and service. The sensitivity and purposeful intent with which these actions are carried out in the home are the foundation for the child's assimilation of attitudes essential to the Christian assembly at worship.

Of all the domestic rituals that form us as family and teach us about community, none is as powerful as the meal. Day by day, the table is where we gather not only to nurture our physical life but also to reach out to one another, tell our day's stories, remember the past or look ahead; we share food for our physical selves and also the food of community, human communing. The domestic table is the basic sacrament for the child and for the household. At the family table, we learn gradually what is done at the eucharistic table of the larger family, the Church. In all this, the value and beauty of common symbols emerge; in the meal shared, the family treasures simple gifts: food and drink and one another’s presence.

Another important ritual in family as well as in the church community is that of family storytelling. An affirmation and celebration of roots, the telling of the family story at home happens in many ways. Parents can recount the major milestones of the family's life, perhaps supplementing these with photos and mementos. On occasions like birthdays, the family highlights the honored person's individual journey of life. In between formal moments of story sharing, there are the spontaneous "Remember when..." moments, offering even the little ones the opportunity to contribute their familiar reminiscences. Young children love the repeated telling of favorite tales, about themselves particularly but about family and relatives as well. The young child is more attuned than many an adult to the oral preliterate tradition (on which the Scriptures themselves are founded) and is one of the best listeners to a well-told story!

In highlighting the importance of table and word, we touch on two fundamental dimensions that are at the heart of most human celebrations. It is not surprising that the eucharist itself from very early times has been comprised of

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4 Keen, 201ff
these elements, and that Vatican Council II spoke of the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the table.

The way we foster these aspects of table and word day by day shapes how our children are capable of entering into liturgical life. As Gabe Huck writes, “We are able to find holiness in the bread that is blessed and shared in the assembly of Christians only if we find holiness in all the fruit of the earth by which we are nourished and brought together.” Likewise, by becoming listeners in the entire scope of our lives, we prepare ourselves to come with openness to God’s word proclaimed in the assembly.

Liturgical texts – the scripture readings, the psalms of the feast or season, or prayers (for instance, the opening prayer used at a given eucharist) – can provide both words and the images from which family celebrations might draw inspiration. Selection of a very limited number of these is sufficient for use with young children for whom repetition of text and music is extremely important. A whole season may be summarized for the household in the use of one particular

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6 In the mid-second century, Justin, a lay philosopher and catechist, gave a description of the celebration of the Lord’s Day: “On the day which is called Sun-day, all, whether they live in the town or in the country, gather in the same place. Then the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read for as long as time allows. When the reader has finished, the president speaks, exhorting us to live by these noble teachings. Then we rise all together and pray. Then, as we said earlier, when the prayer is finished, bread, wine and water are brought. The president then prays and gives thanks as well as he can. And all the people reply with the acclamation: Amen! After this the eucharists are distributed and shared out to everyone, and the deacons are sent to take them to those who are absent.” Apologia 1:67, Lucien Deiss, trans. in Early Sources of the Liturgy (Collegeville: Minn.: Liturgical Press 1967) 25-26.

7 The Council is concerned that “[the rich fare of the Bible] . . . be provided for the faithful at the table of God’s word,” and that the faithful should be “refreshed at the table of the Lord’s body.” Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Rome 1963) nos. 51 and 48, respectively.

song or prayer as table blessing: for the Fifty Days of Easter, the psalm verse, "This is the day that the Lord has made: let us be glad and rejoice in it!" (responsorial psalm refrain, First Sunday of Easter); and for all of Lent, "We do not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (gospel acclamation, First Sunday of Lent). A personal or household anniversary can be summed up and given a motif, also using liturgical/biblical texts: "Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his mercy endures forever!" (responsorial psalm refrain, Second Sunday of Easter).

Activities connected to the feast or season are a way of extending the liturgical celebration into the daily context of the home and into the energetic life of the young child. Domestic resources and family activities – music and dance, arts and crafts, the enjoyment of nature, the preparation and sharing of food – all these can unabashedly be part of celebrating faith and can help the little child experience the joyous breadth of Christian living.

Thus, the family can shape its common prayer, its activities, and even occasionally its mealtime menu on the predominant ideas of a liturgical feast or season. Sunday, for instance, can be welcomed with a ceremonial reading of the gospel on Saturday evening; Easter at home can include a glorious paschal candle decorated by the child; Lent can be made more memorable in the crossed-arm pretzels that symbolize the call to prayer; Christmas can be a time of appreciating nature's light and all lights as reminders of Jesus, promised Light of the World; and Advent's days of waiting can actually be seen and counted in the progressive lighting of the four candles on the Advent wreath.

While deepening its understanding of the spirit of a feast or season, each family can create its own pattern of rituals and customs incorporating the interests, the customs, and perhaps the ethnic background of that family.

To help in this enterprise of establishing some distinctive family ways of marking the liturgical times, parents can gradually assemble for their own resources a few select books, the guideline for their purchase being quality rather than quantity. The home should have a Bible in a translation easily understandable to children – actually, the translation used in parish liturgy is best for home as well, as it gives the child the opportunity to become familiar with the same phrasing of the scripture word.

Also important to have are a list of the readings for Sundays and feasts of the church year (these are sometimes given in the back of liturgically oriented family prayer books) and some type of resource that provides suggestions for the Liturgy of the Hours, especially morning and evening prayer, along with texts and songs for various occasions. A small well-chosen hymnal that contains at least a good number of the selections used in the parish is a long-term spiritual asset in the home.9

Useful too for the household is a book that suggests ways of expanding on liturgical ideas and imagery through arts, crafts, games, group events, and so on.9

9 A household might wish to invest in one or two copies of the parish hymnal for their family use. For a fine general musical resource that contains hymns, litanies, and acclamations, both traditional and contemporary, a brief Liturgy of the Hours for morning and evening, and other prayer texts, see Hymnal for Catholic Students (Chicago: G.I.A. Publications and Liturgy Training Publications 1988)
The latter type of book needs to be rooted strongly in the best liturgical tradition. One judges the soundness of such a volume largely by where its main emphases lie and by the propriety of its suggestions. Is there a disproportionate amount of space given to Advent and nothing to the Sunday or the paschal triduum, both of which are far older and more important in our tradition?

Do the symbols suggested for home use correspond to the time at which they appear in the parish liturgy, for instance, the Christmas tree for Christmas-Epiphanic time and not during Advent, the paschal candle for the third day of triduum and the Easter season and not on Ash Wednesday? Books of excellent sacred art — mosaics, medieval illuminations, stained glass, and paintings of the masters — intrigue children and can often be procured for the home from sale tables or used book shops. A parent can always be alert also for children’s books that explore aspects of Christian spirituality or that present biblical and other stories of our faith tradition in an exceptionally fine way.\(^{10}\)

Cassette tapes and records of music suitable for all kinds of occasions within the family can be either purchased or borrowed from the local library. It is good to expose young children to a wide range of sacred music, the earlier styles as well as contemporary. Gregorian chant to J. S. Bach to Christopher Walker, and everyone in between. This is, of course, a contribution to the child’s aesthetic development. Beyond that, from a religious viewpoint, a broadly inclusive approach offers the child and the family a glimpse of the profound beauty and spiritual insight in the sacred music of God’s people across the ages.

Some simple home decor and supplies that can be collected over time and kept from year to year are also an asset. A parent might invest gradually in objects such as an icon or another piece of fine religious art for the child’s room; an Advent wreath form; or a festal tablecloth of dazzling colors, which could be the Sunday/Easter linen. For arts and crafts to be made, there needs to be the usual paper and glue supplies. In addition, a parent might save from year to year the better and sturdier things that the children themselves have made: drawings and cards and other art pieces (these can be laminated for greater permanence) or decorations for the Christmas tree or Easter baskets. One can make something of a hobby of collecting, adapting, and creating items as well as ideas for the celebrative purposes of one’s family!

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**Beginning Ritual and Common Prayer in the Home**

From the very beginning of a family’s life together, time-honored prayers and gestures from our tradition can be used. One of these prayers, stemming from biblical roots, is the parental blessing of the child. The parent could place a

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\(^{10}\) Individual books are too numerous to list, but the name of Tomie de Paola must at least be mentioned as an example of an author-illustrator who has created many splendid children’s works based on biblical accounts and various other traditional stories.
hand on the child’s head or, if desired, trace the cross on the child’s forehead, saying a simple blessing such as: “May God bless you, N______”; or one with more extended wording such as that from Numbers 6.24-26:

   The LORD bless you and keep you!
   The LORD let his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you!
   The LORD look upon you kindly and give you peace!

This could be both a good-night blessing for children and a good-bye wish prayed when waving farewell to friends or relatives departing the home.

Table prayers are, of course, an excellent time for children to begin participating in community prayer. A spoken table grace or a seasonal song may serve as both a moment of remembering God, the fountain of all good things, and as an occasion of family communion in prayer. Song at meals is a natural place to introduce family singing for households, for everyone is usually present and common prayer here is an accepted practice.

The role of song in religious experience is very significant. Recalling their childhood faith formation at an international meeting recently, a study group of eighteen adults found very little in common in their early spiritual development, except that for each of them, religious music made a distinct impact, which they remembered after many years. To sing is to add an important dimension to the child’s lived experience of faith. To sing is to increase the vividness and memorability of the prayer text.

In an age when community song is so rare in both domestic and social life, to sing at the family table might be virtually the only training ground for the Church’s expression in song. Perhaps the home will find itself responsible for maintaining the tradition of song needed to revitalize and foster parish singing! If possible, it is desirable to use the same liturgical antiphons, psalms, and songs as sung in one’s parish to unify and strengthen the child’s experience of the Church’s feasts and seasons.

If a household finds that it can pray communally on a regular basis, family members could assemble in the morning or after the evening meal for a short prayer time. The prayer could be modelled on the structure of the Liturgy of the Hours, the Church’s official prayer. An abbreviated form designed for the presence and participation of young children follows.

**Call to Prayer**

**Leader:** Come, let us worship the Lord!

**All:** Let us praise his goodness and love!

**Psalm:** For example, Psalm 23, “The Lord is my shepherd.”
(One verse is sufficient if children are very young.)

**Scripture:** Choose a gospel passage, perhaps selected verses, from the previous Sunday’s gospel. (Or, if the prayer is part of a Sunday welcoming service held on Saturday evening, the gospel of the following day is anticipated.)
Canticle: For morning, Zechariah’s Canticle (Lk 2:68-79); for evening, Mary’s Canticle (Lk 2:46-55).

Intercessions: Keep them short, and invite everyone to present people and their needs before God.

Blessing: (Given by a parent in these or similar words:) The Lord bless us and keep us all in his love.

All: Amen.

The more formal prayers suggested above need, of course, to be part of an atmosphere of prayer in the home, part of an ease in speaking of and to the Lord. Such informal prayer or spiritual conversation frequently arises from everyday experiences. Is it a beautiful morning? We are grateful to God for this gift and all the marvellous things that are around us. Something sad befalls us? We accept it as best we can, embrace one another, knowing that God is near. Someone is ill or dies? We know the Lord, the Good Shepherd, cares for that person and for each of us in our need.

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Keeping the Liturgical Cycle, with Sunday as Starting Point

The celebration of the liturgical cycle in the home can be a rich source of spiritual insight for both the child and the family. The sacred rhythms of the week and the year can be an admirable way of initiating the child into the enjoyment of belonging to the Lord. In choosing which festive times to keep, we need not proceed chronologically through the church year. Instead, there is a hierarchy that is evident in the order of evolution of the Church’s major feasts and seasons, for the historical order of developments reveals theological priorities.¹

First, there is the paschal mystery, the Lord’s passing through suffering and death to the glory of resurrection, and each Christian’s sharing in this pasch through sacrament and a life lived by the gospel. This central event of the paschal mystery is celebrated weekly on Sunday, and annually in the paschal cycle, comprised of the paschal triduum, the Fifty Days of Easter, and the preparation time called Lent. Next, there is the Christmas cycle: the Christmas-Epiphany feasts and season, and their preparation time, Advent.

If parents have only a limited amount of energy for liturgical endeavors with their children, they might best use it in celebrating the Sunday worthily, all year long. If parents have another portion of strength to expend, the paschal triduum would be next, and so on, down the liturgical line (the preparation periods for a given season are of less importance than the season itself, so

¹ For a more detailed historical and scriptural background to the liturgical cycle, see Joan Halmo, Celebrating the Church Year with Young Children (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press; Ottawa, ON: Novalis 1988). This book also includes a selection of simple songs, psalm settings, and acclamations written for families with young children.
that the greater emphasis should be, for instance, on keeping Christmas-Epi-
phany than on Advent alone).

The present discussion will focus only on the Sunday. The principles by which
the spirit of Sunday can infuse and shape the day can be used by readers as a
model for home celebrations of other feasts and seasons. One tries to discover
the origins and essential meaning of a given feast and to acquire an unders-
tanding of the images and spirit that can be shaped into the family celebration.

For the Christian Church, the primary and original feast day is Sunday. It is
the day of the resurrection, on which the Lord rose and on which his followers
thereafter have gathered for the eucharist. Thus, essentially, the Lord's Day
and the Lord's supper belong together. Sunday is first and foremost for the
eucharist. Like the disciples of the Lord on the way to Emmaus, the com-
munity recognizes its risen Lord in the breaking of the bread (cf. Lk 24.13-35).
Sometimes known as "the eighth day" because it breaks beyond our usual
calendar cycles of time, Sunday is full of the presence of the risen Christ and
gives us a taste of eternity in his presence. It is the day of God's creation of
light, and of the true Light and new creation who is Christ. It is the day the
Lord has made and we rejoice in it (cf. Ps 118.24). In sum, every Sunday is
Easter and Easter is every Sunday. The Sunday was held in such regard by
our ancestors in faith that they could exclaim: "We cannot live without the
Sunday!" 12 What, then, are the images and key ideas surrounding the
Sunday? Easter, pasch or passover, resurrection, eucharist, light, creation,
eternity, and "alleluia" forever. 13

The awareness of Sunday as a day different from the others in the week could
begin in the prayer made with the child at nighttime or morning, when the adult
could draw attention to the unique meaning of the day. The Church's long-
standing manner of greeting the Sunday (and other great feasts as well) is
with the prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours on Saturday evening, much as the
Jewish people have welcomed the Sabbath with ceremony on the preceding
evening.

The Christian "First Vespers of Sunday" (so named to distinguish it from the
Vespers – evening prayer – of Sunday proper) is the Church's common
evening prayer, pointing forward to and already sharing in the Lord's Day.
Immediately after supper on Saturday, the family could gather for a brief
Vesper service, whose links with Sunday and the "Easter-ness" of Sunday are
the lighting of the household paschal candle at the beginning of the service;
the singing of a psalm, such as Psalm 122, "I rejoiced because they said to
me, 'We will go up to the house of the Lord''; and the proclamation of all or a
portion of the Sunday gospel (for the evening prayer, the form suggested
above could be used).

It is also possible to use the Jewish Sabbath ritual as an inspiration for a
Sunday-welcoming meal to be held on Saturday evening. The lighting of the

12 The fourth-century martyrs of Abitina, Passio SS. ativi, Saturnini Presbyteri et al., in P. F. de
Cavalieri, Note agiografiche, fasc. 8 (Rome 1935) 449

13 Augustine, writing in the earth fifth century, describes Christians as an Easter people whose
food, drink and joy forever is "alleluia." See Augustine, Sermon 152, 9, Mary Sarah Muldowney,
trans. in Saint Augustine – Sermons on the Liturgical Seasons (New York: Fathers of the Church,
Inc. 1959); The Fathers of the Church, Roy Joseph Deferrari, ed., 38:333.
household paschal candle at the family table and the gospel reading could be complemented with the sharing of bread and a cup of wine or juice – the ties with Sunday eucharist are very apparent. Two or three families could gather occasionally for a common celebration of this meal.

The family can prepare together in a number of ways for Sunday’s central moment, the eucharistic liturgy. These ways could include finding and filling a Sunday envelope for the monetary collection (older children who receive an allowance might regularly add some money of their own) or selecting food from the family’s own supply cupboard for the Church’s sharing box. Contributing both money and food for the support of the church community and the poor are part of the venerable Christian tradition, and taking the gifts to the church and presenting them in the eucharistic assembly are an important formative action for the child. The home’s preparation for the Sunday could include even such personal necessities as the Saturday night bath and the setting out of Sunday clothes – best clothes, however simple they may be – or merely having a young child shine all the shoes for Sunday.

Choosing a time for Sunday eucharist that allows for the family’s most focused and lively participation is important. Many parents with young children find that the best time to celebrate eucharist with their parish is the mid-morning. The children are fresh and rested, and there can be less sense of haste when the day arranges itself around the liturgical celebration. On the way to the Sunday liturgy, the family could sing an “alleluia” or an Easter song, the latter being always “in season” on a Sunday. Perhaps, the family might speak together of gathering around Jesus the Shepherd, who calls us and feeds us with his word and with the bread and cup, which are his very life.

The eucharistic celebration itself can be presented in more detail at home to the very young child in terms of the Good Shepherd, as Sofia Cavalletti explains in The Religious Potential of the Child. Finally, on the Sunday, it is ideal to arrive early enough at the church building to take time to walk around there, to visit the various centers for liturgical action, to meet some of the other members of the assembly, or simply to foster the child’s familiarity with the “house of the Church,” as it was called in ancient times.

Extending the message of the Sunday word at home can take different forms. If the child has heard the gospel reading of the day at a Sunday-welcoming service at home, he or she might easily remember a passage of the reading proclaimed at liturgy and share it with the family. Perhaps, the parent could sing with the child the refrain of the Sunday responsorial psalm; this could be done on the way home from Sunday eucharist and also during the week. This is an excellent way to provide the child with some of the phrases of biblical prayer and to use the Sunday psalm in the manner described so beautifully in the late fourth century by John Chrysostom: The psalm refrain becomes like a walking stick, which we carry along home and which can support us spiritually during the whole week.

Older preschoolers are usually able to remember something from the homily of the day (it is hoped that the latter has included some thoughts comprehensible even to the child). A striking line from the gospel of the day or the psalm refrain or an idea gleaned from the homily could be printed on a large paper and mounted on the refrigerator or in another place in the home where everyone will see it frequently throughout the week.

Sometimes, if the Sunday gospel has been especially vivid in its imagery, if the family is in a mood of reflective quiet, and if the child is not overly weary, a parent could spend some gospel-telling time with the child, either on the Sunday or later in the week. The Sunday gospel story could be told and discussed, then expressed in a drawing or in a symbol (often a child prefers to express its spiritual understanding in a nonverbal manner). For suggestions in finding symbols related to the Sunday gospels, Gaynell Cronin’s *Sunday throughout the Week* is helpful.

Family mealtimes on Sunday can be made more special to underline the Easter character of the day. The paschal candle could be lit at all Sunday meals, and the table prayer could be a sung “alleluia” or a resurrection-oriented prayer. As often as is feasible, one can try to serve something in a festal way at each meal. A household might establish its own customs of Sunday foods centering on family favorites. Sunday supper can be made as elaborate as the family’s day allows, using the best table linen and dishes. From time to time, children could be invited to make decorated placecards, a center-piece, or a more elaborate dessert for the family.

Sunday in its Christian origins was not primarily a day of rest but, rather, a day of eucharistic worship. In our time, with so many societal factors eroding the family’s time together for leisure, prayer, and other activities in common, it is most fitting that the Sunday be seen as a day set apart for rejuvenation and refreshment in the Lord and in the community. Making a clear option for the special observance of Sunday as a holy day in the home can sometimes be difficult and is certainly not an obvious route to take in our society.

As Bishop Joseph Fiorenza writes, “For many, [making this option] will require a new and fresh way of thinking and action . . . Sunday has a sacred character which must not be eclipsed by commercial or profane interests.”

Family members could spend time more liberally with one another, with friends or relatives. There should be time to visit the sick, call on an aged friend, phone someone in need, invite a lonely person to share a meal, or just be in touch again with old friends. There should be space to enjoy music, the arts, sports, and recreation. At least on occasion, this is a day to take off watches and ignore the clock, abandon agendas, and taste the freedom of the timeless eternity of which Sunday is a sign!

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16 Gaynell Cronin, *Sunday throughout the Week* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press 1981)

17 For an array of fine “liturgical” recipes along with very interesting historical details regarding traditions of foods for the Church’s feasts and seasons, see Evelyn Birge Vitz, *A Continual Feast* (New York: Harper and Row; Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside 1985).

Conclusion

The home that provides a matrix for celebration and ritual has to be expressive of Christian values in other aspects of living, lest children learn the falsehood that religion and life are separable from one another. We need to strive communally toward prevention of the kind of impression offered to Robert Coles by a young boy: "you can be religious and bad . . . ." 19 A family's examination of its life-style choices will benefit much from a book such as Parenting for Peace and Justice by Kathleen and James McGinnis. 20 The following are some initial questions to pose in the family's ongoing search to let gospel values transform its lifestyle:

- Are we freeing ourselves from inordinate preoccupation with possessions in order to nurture inner resources, spiritual receptivity, and personal relationship?
- Are we working toward greater simplicity in the family's food and clothing usage and encouraging a generally appreciative attitude in each person?
- Among our children, do we foster creativity and new skills rather than rely on passive entertainment and expensive toys?
- What games and toys do we present to our children – those based on violence and war or those that teach attitudes of cooperation and peace?
- Are we nurturing the child's pleasure in nature into an attitude of environmental responsibility?
- In our family relationships, is there an effort to emphasize positive behaviour, to affirm consciously, to express affection, to listen and to share, to resolve conflict in non-violent ways?
- How are we handling the ongoing task of accepting a wide range of differences in people: race, gender, age, various physical and mental abilities?
- Do we involve young children in direct service to persons at hand - feeding the hungry, visiting the sick, and so on – thus, awakening an awareness of broader social responsibility?

In sum, it is impossible to pray for peace and sing of salvation if all of us, young and old, are not about the business of establishing in some way the reign of peace, justice, and truth.

How can one ever hope for time to do all this, to take time to wonder and celebrate and in the same breath to carry on the work of building the kingdom? Not

19 Robert Coles, The Spiritual Life of Children (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin 1990) 171. The boy who made this observation was, of course, not a preschooler, although very young children have an uncanny way of perceiving a great deal more than we suspect.
all parents will have the same amount of time to spend with their children; not all parents will have the luxury of choosing whether or not to work outside the home. However, in the time that is available, something can be done. Choices will have to be made for a particular lifestyle, one that leaves time for the things that are important for a family that cherishes and intends to foster Christian values.

Special times for activities or sharing will have to be protected vigorously against inroads from daily tasks and unnecessary interruptions. A parent must be flexible enough, nevertheless, to respond to the needs of a child who may be tired or totally engaged in another type of activity at the very time the adult designates for a shared spiritual time. As always with children, schedules and people need to be malleable, and the best-laid plans should be adjusted with sensitivity and patience!

Probably one of the hardest things to opt for firmly and to carry out regularly is the family meal (although it is easier when children are very young to achieve the goal of at least one family meal daily than it is when children are older and involved in more activities outside the home). Instinctively, we know that when something critical is at stake, if there is a will, there is almost always a way. In the end, it is often a question of decision, decisiveness, and the commitment and the courage to assume what is really a counter-cultural stance.

Because of the pluralism in today's society, many families engaged in the Christian journey seek the support of other families with children of similar age. It is desirable that children have peers for whom a Christian frame of reference and Christian values are operative. It is ideal to know others for whom the rhythms of life and of the ecclesial times are marked in a spirit of thanks and praise, and for whom the striving for peace and justice is a familiar aspiration. Activities or celebrations related to the great feasts and seasons of the church year could be held in common sometimes, with the children of the various families contributing as age permits. A group of families with children of the same age, for example, might make their Advent wreaths together and also their Advent sharing boxes for the collection of money for the poor, or, just before Lent begins, there might be a joint carnival hour in which dress-up, dance, and fancy treats are enjoyed prior to the austere and solemn Lenten days.

Families could jointly utilize the "cadential" occasions of the church year—the analogy taken from music where cadences punctuate and bring to conclusion the sections of a work. In the liturgical year, the ending of the seasons of Christmas-Epiphany and of the Easter Fifty Days are such times. At these times, the Church completes a liturgical cycle of major importance, even while society at large has anticipated and secularized it (e.g., in the case of Christmas) or is not so much as cognizant of the season (e.g., in the case of the Fifty Days). A small group of families who has kept the spirit of the seasons could come together on these "cadential" occasions to conclude with a flourish what they have observed in their own homes. In this way, children have the supportive presence of both peers and elders who cherish life in Christ and the Church.

Parishes could often be more supportive to the parents of young children who wish to deepen their own spiritual understanding as they pass on the faith tradition to their families. Could the parish arrange for speakers or offer a
meeting place or make available to families some resources – books, audio-and video-cassettes, and perhaps the occasional workshop for the whole family? Have parents of young children actually asked, and asked persistently, for the parish's assistance in such an enterprise? Parents themselves must make their parish leaders more aware of the potential for creative action in this little-explored pastoral area. Together, we need to find ways in which we can assist one another in the wonderful and challenging task at hand, nurturing our very young children into a life of praise or, as the psalmist has it, a life filled with new song and festive dance in honour of the Lord.

Suggested Reading


Halmo, Joan. *Celebrating the Church Year with Young Children.* Collegeville: Liturgical Press; Ottawa, ON: Novalis, 1988


Praying in the Home

Samuel Torvend

Samuel Torvend earned his doctoral degree from St. Louis University; his dissertation was on the prophetic role of bishops in church-state relations according to St. Ambrose. He serves as an editor of liturgical resources for Augsburg Fortress Publishers.

How Does One Begin to Pray in the Home?

Just as we cannot expect the body to be nourished on one meal a week, so we cannot expect the life of faith to be nourished with only one hour of Sunday worship. While we may join others for one hour each week at Sunday's Mass, we spend one hundred sixty-seven hours at home, in school, or at work. With increasing awareness and urgency, many Christians are beginning to recognize that the household is the domestic church, and that in this primary community, faith is nurtured in the practice of daily prayer.

How, then, does one begin to pray in the home? First, we must recognize that many Catholics (and indeed, many other Christians as well) are not at ease in leading prayer or speaking about their faith. It may not be that difficult to go to Mass on Sunday; after all, someone else is leading prayer and preaching. But the thought of praying out loud or speaking of the meaning of one's faith or singing a simple song can be substantial challenges for many people.

To promote prayer in the home, however, does not demand a seminary education or a degree in music. While one does need to struggle with the reasons for praying in the home, it is good to remember that with simple steps and patience, a diverse array of possibilities will emerge that respond to the unique possibilities and personalities in a household.

Second, it is important to recognize that for many people the demands of work or school or household life are difficult enough to manage. Crowded and conflicting schedules lead many to believe that it is not possible to do one more thing. And yet if one seeks to nurture faith, one will need to answer the question, How shall we pray? If we are intentional about playing sports, watching television, or working long hours, how will we shape a pattern of prayer appropriate to the rhythm of life in this setting and time?

Third, the various conditions in which people live and work will dictate the form and content as well as the time of household prayer. A retired person or couple may have more time to establish a regular and perhaps lengthier rhythm of prayer than a working mother who has many concerns that hold her
attention from early morning until bedtime. It does no good, however, to criti-
icize ourselves for not doing more. The perverse logic of feeling guilty is that
it simply leads one, in the end, to do nothing at all. Various times of the day,
the week, the year, of a lifetime invite different forms of prayer.

When Will We Pray?

The first Christians, being Jews, prayed in the pattern of that religion and
culture: in the morning, at midday, in the early evening, and at bedtime. The
pattern of the day — sunrise, high noon, sunset, darkness of night — provided
images through which they prayed to Christ: the morning star, the sun of
justice, the light in darkness. For Christians today, a good place to begin daily
prayer is in the morning with the simple invocation of one of God’s names
(Creator, Mercy, Hope, Redeemer) or a brief prayer addressed to Christ (e.g.,
“Christ our light, guide us this day.”) The point of such prayer is to place
the day under God’s grace, to petition God’s guidance during the day. In some
households, breakfast or the evening meal is the only time a family gathers. A
table grace (meal prayer) addressed to God may be said by anyone capable
of offering thanks for the meal.

Another time for prayer — especially important for children — is at bedtime. But
here a word of caution: it is better for a parent to share the bedtime prayers
with a child than simply say “Don’t forget to say your prayers.” Faith nurtures
faith when prayer — no matter how brief its forms — is shared.

Other ordinary occasions are appropriate for prayer: leaving for school, going
on a holiday, visiting the doctor. The larger transitions of life invite prayer in
the household: school beginnings and commencements, moving to a new
home, sickness, starting a new job. When family and friends gather for hol-
days, birthdays, or anniversaries, it is always appropriate to sing, share a
meal prayer, read a brief portion of Scripture, or recite a blessing. The
beginning of each liturgical season — filled with unique images, readings,
songs, foods, and customs — is an obvious time to gather for household
prayer: lighting the Advent wreath, blessing the Christmas tree and crèche,
gathering for a simple meal in Lent, placing palms in the home, praying
before a cross, lighting baptismal candles at Pentecost, visiting the graves of
one’s beloved dead in November — these are all occasions for simple or
festive household prayer.

From a brief morning prayer to a festive meal at one of the great holidays, the
times for household prayer are abundant. Indeed, the question is not a
quantity of prayer (more words), but the commitment to a regular rhythm that
can be expanded at special times. In one household, a brief prayer at
breakfast may be the regular pattern punctuated by a seasonal meal prayer
during the Christmas and Easter seasons. In another household, bedtime
prayer may be the most appropriate time for parents and children. The chal-
lenge is to commit oneself to a time that is workable given the particular
needs and constraints of the household.
Where Will We Pray?

Christianity is a visual religion. Faith enables us to see the realities of this world with eyes enlightened by the gift of grace. Indeed, Christian faith is not so much an idea we simply think about, but a way of living within this time and this place. It is a way of living through all the senses. Thus, while one may pray at any time, in any place—while driving a car or changing a diaper—it remains important to have a visual center, a place for prayer that accords with the changing seasons of the year. This center may be a cross or a sacred image that focuses daily, weekly, or seasonal prayer. One may light a candle, use a small bowl of holy water, or place a vase of flowers around this center. Certain feasts provide obvious centers for prayer: around the Advent wreath, by the Christmas tree, next to the crèche, before a cross, in a garden (or a "garden" transplanted indoors).

Whether one prays alone or with others, for only a few moments or for a longer period of time, it is necessary to turn off the radio and television so that one's own voice may be heard, so that the words of Scripture, a prayer, or a song may be heard. North American culture, inundated with a barrage of noises and captivated by "productive" activity, does not readily welcome silence and the contemplative spirit. Conventional wisdom says that children in particular are not capable of sitting quietly. And yet when anyone's attention is focused on a visual or mental image, it does become possible to nurture an island of peace wherein the simple and serene power of prayer begins to flourish.

The visual environment for prayer includes the human body. One may pray kneeling, standing, or sitting on the floor or a chair. Many people bow before an image of Christ or the cross. Others pray in the form of the cross, standing with arms outspread. Some pray with palms opened toward the sky. Others hold hands in a circle. When children are encouraged to pray with their bodies and see in their parents a natural ease in making the sign of the cross, or kneeling, or holding palms open toward the sky, they will feel no discomfort in using such gestures of Christian prayer.

Certainly, one gesture should be taught and practiced by all Christians: making the sign of the cross. In baptism, the cross is traced over the forehead marking us as a follower of Christ for all eternity. When we pray in the household and at the Sunday liturgy, we make the sign of the cross asking God's blessing and showing our commitment to Christ. Every Ash Wednesday we receive the cross of ashes on our foreheads as the sign of our mortality and God's loving embrace of our frailty. At our death, the waters of baptism will be sprinkled over us as the sign of the cross is traced above our bodies. It is a simple gesture filled with Christian realism (our lives will come to an end) and Christian hope (Christ is with us in all our dyings and risings, leading us from death to life).

Other ordinary activities are the natural sources of Christian actions: bathing, applying lotion, dressing, using lights, eating a meal, shaking hands or embracing or kissing, giving medicine or a soothing backrub to someone sick or sore. When one is engaged in these activities, it is not necessary to make them into object lessons for oneself or for a child (i.e., "This bath is like
baptism in which God washes away our sins."). One may simply say a brief prayer: O God, we thank you for the waters of this bath/shower that cleanse and refresh us; O God, we thank you for this food that strengthens us; O God, we thank you for the medicine/rest that brings us healing/health.

Whether one lives alone or with others, it is always appropriate and enjoyable to use one's skills to enhance the seasonal environment. Whether one makes candles, a garland of greens, brightly dyed eggs, coloured pictures, or a wreath, the talents of the household become a visual form of prayer.

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**With What Words Shall We Pray?**

Two extremes answer this question inappropriately. One view suggests that rote memorization and recitation of certain prayers or portions of Scripture constitute the fullness of Christian prayer. The difficulty with this view is that it overlooks the ever-changing nature of human life and can fail to adapt to new situations. (Sad? Recite X. Happy? Recite X. Marriage breaking up? Recite X.) This "one prayer fits all circumstances" model does not recognize that authentic prayer begins with honest expression of one's situation. Nor does this view do justice to the remarkably diverse images and stories of the Christian tradition that reflect the range of contemporary human experience. Some words — a psalm excerpt, a phrase from Scripture, an honest conviction ("I'm confused") — are more appropriate than others given a particular situation.

The other extreme (many times in response to the first) argues that any concern or image that arises spontaneously from my experience is the best (if not only) form of prayer. The difficulty with this second extreme is that while it rightly values human experience and its heartfelt expressions, one person's particular experience can become the sum total of all human experience ("I am despairing and there is no hope"). Likewise, the emphasis on "my experience" alone can make one enclosed; it can ignore the diversity of scriptural/liturgical images and stories that place this experience within a larger field of meaning.

With what words shall we pray? Where human need (e.g., "Oh, my God, I've lost my job") and the Christian prayer tradition meet (e.g., "O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put to shame," [Psalm 25]), the truth of human experience is spoken within the larger story of a people's faith. Prayer in the Christian tradition does not exclude our experience but welcomes the Christian interpretation of our experience.

In daily prayer, we do not so much learn to pray a set of words as we begin to see our lives within the mystery of God's unfailing love and grace. Perhaps this is why Christians continue to rely on three fundamental sources for prayer: the *Psalms* with their broad texture of human experience and feeling; the *prayers and songs of the New Testament*; and selected phrases or texts from the *liturgy*. From these three sources, a number of patterns appear for use in the household. In daily prayer one may pray at the beginning or end of the day with the invocation of the Trinity ("In the name of the Father, and of
the Son . . .") or a prayer to Christ or a brief phrase from a Psalm. One may say a table grace as well as pray the Our Father in the morning, in the evening, and before going to bed.

Sunday prayer begins with Saturday's sunset and ends on Sunday evening. One may light a candle and offer thanks for one's baptism, pray the Sunday responsorial psalm, have a festive meal with a table prayer, or draw an image inspired by one of the readings, or simply ask, "What do you think about the Gospel reading?"

Perhaps a phrase of direct address to God or Christ from one of the Sunday readings may be repeated throughout the following week as a brief prayer, a Christian "mantra." In some households, portions of the Sunday readings are read for six days, letting the word dwell in the heart throughout the week. One simple practice is the daily recitation of a short phrase from the Sunday liturgy: "Lord, have mercy," "Peace to God's people on earth," "We believe in one God," "Blessed be God for ever," "Heaven and earth are full of your glory," "Lord, you have set us free," "Peace," "Serve the Lord."

These daily and Sunday patterns of prayer are enriched by the liturgical seasons. Various printed resources offer seasonal blessings for household use throughout the year. The great fasts and seasons invite the household to pray and sing new words and images (think of Advent's O antiphons). Likewise, various cultures and ethnic communities offer ways to eat and smell the season (e.g., a vegetarian diet in Lent, lamb and eggs at Easter, clouds of whipped cream or spicy casserole at Pentecost). Indeed, when adults are asked what they remember of the seasons from childhood, the human senses of smell, taste, and sight predominate.

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Prayer for Life

Prayer begins with the newborn infant who cries out to her mother. With tears and outstretched hands, she directly addresses the one whom she knows instinctively is her strength, sustenance, and safety. Prayer is the human spirit calling out to God for health, wisdom, and guidance throughout life. It should come as no surprise to us that the most common scriptural image for human life and a life guided by faith is walking on a path or a road. Just as one learns to walk in infancy and relies on others for strength and guidance, so one learns to walk by faith in the rhythms of daily, weekly, and seasonal prayer in the home. Such prayer is the simple recognition that God is the source of our very existence – in health and weakness, in happiness and despair. Prayer in the household is our personal and communal call to the One who reveals Christ as our companion on the path. Prayer – in season and out of season – is the simple means through which we are led by the Spirit to hear the voice of the One who is calling and leading us, to see the bright and loving heart that is greater than any of our frailties. Prayer in the household of faith invites us to welcome the Christ who already lives with us, making our home his dwelling place.
Welcome Home: Scripture, Prayers, and Blessings for the Household, Year A. Edited by Samuel Torvend. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995). Organized according to the Sundays and seasons of the year, Welcome Home is a practical resource for daily prayer in the home. It will be published in three volumes that parallel the three-year cycle of the lectionary.

Face to Face with God: A Guide for Prayer Ministry (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995). This program is a resource for parishes that want to help members and friends grow in their understanding and practice of prayer. Leader resources include a video and two handbooks. Three readers and a prayer journal are available for individuals. Resources may be purchased individually or as a set. The components of this program are as follows:

Coming Face to Face with God: Conversations on Prayer (Video)

Face to Face with God in Your Church: Establishing a Prayer Ministry, by Bjorn Pedersen (Leader’s Handbook, 128 pages)

Face to Face with God in Your Home: Guiding Children and Youth in Prayer, by Carolyn Luetje and Meg Marcrander (Leader’s Handbook, 104 pages)

Prayer: Beginning Conversations with God, by Richard J. Beckman (A Reader, 80 pages)

Praying for Friends and Enemies: Intercessory Prayer, by Jane E. Vennard (A Reader, 80 pages)

Praying for Wholeness and Healing, by Richard J. Beckman (A Reader, 80 pages)

Seeking God’s Face: A Prayer Journal, 48 pages.
Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and World Religions

The Rev. Thomas Ryan, a Paulist priest, is Director of the Canadian Centre of Ecumenism in Montreal. This article is based on an address given last year at the Atlantic School of Theology, and is an excerpt from a forthcoming book. It is reprinted here with permission.

In contemporary Canadian society, Roman Catholics work and play more and more often with neighbors and fellow citizens who are not Christians, but members of what are called world religions: Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and others. This proximity moves us to understand these people as religious persons, and to try to appreciate what we have in common and what divides us, as members of distinct religious faiths. At times, and following the example of Pope John Paul II, we may come together to worship with members of these world religions. This again raises many questions for us. The area of interfaith relations and interfaith worship is new to most of us. The following article by an expert in the area makes us aware of some of the principles involved, and some of the questions that are being asked. It is clear that there is still much to learn and to discern; the final answer awaits us.

The distinction and the unity between world religions and Christianity elude a perfect analysis. We are only now engaging in direct and frequent dialogue and encounter with one another. In past centuries, each religion stayed largely within its own cultural borders and framework of reference. Shifting populations and patterns of immigration, however, are creating a new cosmopolitan society in which followers of several different religions now inhabit the same cities in significant numbers.

It took Christian theology nearly five centuries (until the Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451) to evolve a statement that most Christians could agree upon regarding who and what Jesus Christ was and is. It will take us a long while yet to work out a theology of other religions. We are only now developing appropriate language and categories of thought.

We will surely make some mistakes and discover ourselves in some culs-de-sac in the process. Among many theological voices, one which seems to me to be both faithful to the New Testament witness and open to God’s work in other religions is that of Jacques Dupuis. Some of the perspectives presented here from his book, Christ at the Encounter of World Religions provide con-
temporary Christians with an orientation to the important question of where and how to situate Jesus in the context of this new dialogue.

The message Christians announce has always been problematic: that universal salvation has been effected by the death on a cross, in a determinate time and place, of a human being, Jesus of Nazareth, who was the anointed one of God. To suggest that one particular culture could have received the legacy of a solitary salvation event occurring in a particular religious tradition — this seems to constitute a belittling of religious traditions and cultures such as those of Asia which are actually older and possess remarkable treasures of their own. When confronted with what Christianity claims for Jesus of Nazareth, thoughtful Hindus and Buddhists understandably find it sectarian if not scandalous, parochial if not inequitable.

But as Christians, we can only seek the meaning of the phenomena of the history of religions from within the standpoint of Christian faith. It is for Buddhists or Hindus or others to do a theology of religions from their own perspective. A Christian theology of religions is necessarily a christology of religions. The mystery of Jesus Christ, the center of Christian faith, is our principle of understanding, the yardstick by which the data of other religious traditions can be measured. Our task is to show that a Christian theology of religions can and should be truly universal and adopt a global perspective. It is not closed or narrow, stingy or mean, but cosmic in its dimensions.

As Christian theology shares certain basic intuitions with other religions, it can itself be enriched by contact with them and their theological traditions. Our task is to demonstrate that a theology of the history of religions based on Christian faith establishes, on a cosmic scale, a wonderful convergence in the mystery of Christ of all that God in the divine Spirit has realized and continues to accomplish in the history of humanity.

The Holy Spirit at Work Throughout the History of Humanity

If we broaden our perspective and consider the economy of salvation through the history of humanity, we may distinguish four successive periods in the history of salvation, each one corresponding to a divine covenant.

• First, the covenant with humanity in Adam and Eve.

• Second, the covenant with Noah who symbolizes the religious traditions of the nations.

• Third, the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenant with Israel.

• And finally, the covenant established by God in Jesus Christ with the new people of God.
The whole economy of salvation is dynamically ordered by the providence of God toward its full manifestation in Jesus. At each stage of this development, God’s commitment to humanity is renewed.²

The covenant with humanity’s religious traditions represented in Noah remains in effect even during the time of the church, wherever the gospel of Jesus Christ has not been effectively preached. Put another way, followers of other religions who have not been personally summoned by the gospel in their conscience continue to lead their lives under the cosmic covenant to which other religions belong. For these members, these religious traditions serve as a means of salvation, a role which they perform in relation to the mystery of Christ and under the influence of his power. The coming in time of “special” salvation history (i.e., the post-Incarnation period) does not abolish the validity of “general” salvation history.³

We must acknowledge that many men and women in these traditions have encountered God in an authentic religious experience. For example, one does not pray to an impersonal God; it entails a personal relationship between an “I” and an infinite “Thou.” Authentic prayer is a reliable sign that God has undertaken the initiative of a personal approach to human beings and has been welcomed in faith. However incomplete and imperfect their conception of God might be, whoever entrust themselves to God in charity and faith are saved. Salvation, after all, depends on the response made by sinful human beings in faith to a personal communication initiated by God.⁴

Sometimes we try to make sense of the destiny of those not Christian by allowing them the possibility of salvation on the basis of their personal sincerity, thereby denying any salvific value to their religion as such. But the religious traditions of humanity take their origin from the religious experience of the persons or groups that have founded them. Their sacred books contain the memory and record of concrete encounters with the divine. Their practices result from the codification of these experiences. Thus it makes no sense to assert that their religion plays no role in their salvation.⁵

The Bible does not see all truth confined first to Israel and then to the Christ or the church. Melchizedek, a non-Jewish priest, is seen by Abraham as a priest of God. The Letter to the Hebrews says that Christ’s priesthood is like Melchizedek’s. Proverbs has chapters taken from an Egyptian wisdom book. Stoic truisms appear in Paul. Many other scriptural verses acknowledge truth elsewhere. We can infer from them that we will find truth in other religions.⁶

In short, this theology of world religions posits that, before uttering the ultimate divine word in Jesus Christ, even before speaking through the prophets of the Old Testament, God has already uttered an initial word to human beings through the prophets of the nations. The echoes and traces of this word can be found in the holy scriptures of the world’s religious traditions.

² Ibid., 167
³ Ibid., 140-141
⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Ibid., 144
⁶ Frederick W. Norris, “Christianity and Interfaith Dialogue,” Ecumenical Trends (April 1993) 59
The Old Testament itself in its Genesis stories of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel and Noah, bears witness that God spoke to the nations before ever addressing Israel. Thus the holy scriptures of the nations, along with the Hebrew scriptures and the New Testament, reflect the various modes in which God's divine self-revelation continually found expression throughout human history.

In the first stage, God grants to the hearts of seers and sages a sacred word, at least traces of which are contained in the sacred scriptures of the world's religions. In the second stage, God speaks officially to Israel by the mouth of its prophets, and the entire Hebrew Bible is the record of this word. Both of these words find their full revelation in the third and last stage wherein God utters the decisive word in the divine Son. It is to this incarnate Word that the whole New Testament bears formal witness. In this overarching perspective, the history of salvation and revelation is one, revealing the influence of the Holy Spirit in all its stages: cosmic, Israelite, and Christian. Throughout this long and complex history, God has been personally guiding humanity toward the goal divinely set.7

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**Christ is Universal**

From the viewpoint of Christian faith, Christ is universal. He belongs to all religions. More precisely, they all belong to him, since he is present and active in them all, just as in all human beings. In order to see this, we need to recall that the divine Word is the universal agent of all God's historical self-manifestation – even before God's incarnation in Jesus of Nazareth.

Thus a Christian theology of religions is able to enrich itself with the intuitions of other religious traditions since they contain an authentic manifestation of God through the mediation of the divine Word. It will also be able to recognize in the holy scriptures of other traditions not only a word addressed by God to their members, but a word through which God speaks to Christians themselves, even though in Jesus Christ God has spoken the decisive divine Word to the world.

May we think that God speaks to us Christians through the prophets and sages whose religious experience is the source of the sacred books of these traditions? The fullness of revelation contained in Jesus Christ and transmitted by the church does not gainsay this possibility. Nor is it opposed to the use in Christian prayer, even in the Liturgy of the Word, of the words of God contained in the sacred books of other traditions. Indeed, this ought to be done, with prudence and with respect for the different stages of revelation history. Also required will be the discernment necessary to avoid any ambiguities by a responsible selection of texts, in harmony with the history of Jesus Christ in which the Liturgy of the Word culminates.8

7 Dupuis, *Jesus Christ*, 176
8 Readers will of course be aware that there is no authorization to use nonbiblical readings in official liturgies of the Roman Catholic Church [Ed.].
Under these conditions, we shall discover, with joy and surprise, astonishing convergence between the words of God and the divine Word in Jesus Christ. Certain aspects of the divine mystery may actually be given more emphasis in other sacred scriptures than in the New Testament. We need only think of the deep sense of the divine majesty and the holiness of the divine decrees on every page of the Qur'an, or the sense of the immanent presence of God and the interiority in which religious experience is steeped in the sacred books of Hinduism. Paradoxical as it may appear, a prolonged contact with the nonbiblical scriptures — practiced within their own faith — can help Christians to a more in-depth discovery of certain aspects of the divine mystery that they behold fully revealed in Jesus Christ.8

Two Fundamental Axioms of Christian Faith

In its interface with other world religions, Christian theology is experiencing a renewal today as it did in ages past through contact with Greek philosophy. Just as the dialogue with the rediscovered Aristotle enabled Thomas Aquinas to deepen his theological understanding and to recast Christian theology in the medieval situation, so is the dialogue with Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Jews and others in different parts of the world enabling us to deepen our theological understanding and to recast some of our theological ideas in the modern situation.9

That said, one should be aware that Thomas Aquinas did not accept everything that Aristotle had to say. In order for us to have similar powers of discernment concerning what to appropriate and what not, we need to maintain a firm grasp of our own faith convictions. There are two fundamental axioms of Christian faith that find application here: the will of God to save all, and the central place of the mystery of Christ in the concrete realization of the divine salvific plan.10

These axioms may seem at first contradictory, but when properly understood they find their linkage in what theology calls “the Christic mystery.” One explicit New Testament text which utters both axioms in quick succession is found in 1 Timothy 2.4-6: “God wants everyone to be saved and to reach full knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is only one mediator between God and humanity, himself human, Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all” (emphasis mine).

The second axiom, relating to the central place of Christ in God’s plan to save all, places Christ in the role of universal saviour. He is at the center of the

8 Ibid., 177
10 Dupuis, Jesus Christ, 151
mystery of salvation, as obligatory mediator and the way leading to God, because God and no one else — not human beings or Christianity — has put him there. This is the message of the New Testament in its entirety, the assertion underlying every part of it, the deep faith without which none of the books that comprise it would have been written.\textsuperscript{11}

These two axioms — that God's salvific will is truly universal, and that salvation comes through God in Christ alone — are the touchstones of orthodoxy in any Christian theology of religions. By holding these two axioms in fruitful tension, a Christian theology of world religions can be characterized by an openness and a commitment to explore the many and various ways in which God has spoken to all people. This exploration has the potential to transform, enrich and fulfill Christianity, giving the church a future shape quite different from the one we know today.\textsuperscript{12}

"To say that Christ is at the center of the divine plan for humanity," writes Dupuis, "is not to consider him as the goal and end toward which the religious life of human beings and the religious traditions of humanity tend. God [the Father] remains the goal and end. Jesus never replaces God. Jesus Christ is at the center of the mystery as obligatory mediator, constituted by God and no one else, as the way leading to God."\textsuperscript{13}

The historical Jesus, constituted Christ and Lord in his resurrection, is God turning to human beings in self-revelation and self-giving. He is God in a personal relationship with men and women, very God turned toward human beings in self-bestowal. Christians are those who come to an explicit discovery of God personally present to them in Jesus. This Christic mystery remains implicit for those who do not recognize the mystery of salvation actively and universally present to them in Christ.

The place Jesus Christ occupies in Christianity is central. No other religion attributes such a unique place to its founder. For Islam, Muhammad is the depository of the divine message, the prophet through whom God speaks. For Buddhism, Gautama is the great teacher, the Enlightened One showing the way. For Christianity, however, Jesus claims equality with God. He never refuses the title Messiah. He corrects holy writ. He insists that prophecy is fulfilled in him and that the Kingdom appears through his acts.\textsuperscript{14}

It is the mystery of Jesus Christ himself, and not just his message, that is at the very heart of faith. The message and the Messenger blend into one. Christianity is not, then, a "religion of the book," as Islam is sometimes described. It is the religion of a person, the Christ.\textsuperscript{15}

The uniqueness of Jesus Christ and the universal meaning of the Christ event represent more than a central belief for Christian tradition. These truths are seen as the very foundation of faith. They have always been, and still are, a stumbling block for those who do not share our faith. Uniqueness and universal

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 110
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 109
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 110
\textsuperscript{14} Norris, "Interfaith Dialogue," 61
\textsuperscript{15} Dupuis, Jesus Christ, 93-94
are understood here in the strict sense: by and in Jesus, God effected a self-manifestation in a manner that is decisive for all and can neither be surpassed nor repeated.

In the last analysis, of course, the sole valid theological foundation of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and the universal import of his life, death and resurrection is his personal identity as Son of God. To confess him as such is to make an act of faith. As St. Paul says: "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' but under the impulse of the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12.2). But our dialogue with other faiths will need to include the particularity of claims for Jesus as having been in the form of God and having taken on the form of a servant – a claim that the church has early and often made (Philippians 2.6-11).

Christianity advances no claims concerning Christians themselves. Its claims are with respect to Jesus. He is the one who is unique, not us. While we have received a commission to bear a worthy witness of our faith, history provides ample testimony that we often fail. Fortunately, God's fidelity does not depend on ours, just as Jesus' mystery and uniqueness does not depend on the quality of our witness.6

Given the central place of Jesus in Christian faith, it comes as no surprise that Christian spirituality is deeply personal, locking onto the person of Christ, studying him in the gospels with a steady gaze and purity of heart, wanting only to know him personally and what he wants of us. Gradually, this becomes "the one thing necessary": to do what our heart tells us that he would have us do. Other things begin to matter less and less. It is this affair of the heart, this deepening sense of intimacy and trust, this relationship of love that becomes the center of our lives.

Interfaith dialogue assumes that we have in some fashion wrestled with the fundamental questions of Christian faith and that we are committed to Christ. This does not mean that we never suffer doubts about the assertions of Christianity, but it does mean that, day by day, we find enough sense and beauty in the venture of loving Christ to sustain us without great trouble. Thus we are in a position to serenely and joyfully cross the bridge of dialogue with Eastern religions.

The hidden presence of the mystery of Christ in other religions has profound implications for us. Since all God's communications with humanity have been through the eternal Word (become flesh in Jesus of Nazareth), salvation is both present and effective in the religious traditions of the world both before and after Jesus Christ. Thus we may approach in a spirit of alert openness and discerning receptivity. Since others have an experience of God through the Christic mystery, their religious traditions have something to offer Christians.

In Christ at the Encounter of World Religions, Jacques Dupuis writes:

They [other religious traditions] can help them [Christians] to discover new facts of the mystery of Christ. Certain aspects of the mystery of Christ may be felt more profoundly by others than by many Christians. A sharing in the religious experience of others in the interreligious dialogue

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6 Ibid., 204
can help Christians deepen their own perception of the Christian mystery, even though they have already received its authentic revelation.

After all, Truth is not an object to be possessed, but a person by whom to allow oneself to be possessed. The others are possessed by the same Truth. Thus, while it may seem somewhat paradoxical, it is theologically correct to say that they can teach us something of the mystery of Christ . . . . Christ can be just as personally present — or even more so — to some of their deeply committed members than to less committed Christians. 17

In the early part of this century the missiological slogan was “the world for Christ in this century!” At the end of this century, we are confronted by the permanence of world religious pluralism, which has not been greatly affected by the Christian mission of conversion. Does this mean that such pluralism is part of God’s grace?

What does this mean for the situation of interreligious dialogue? It would seem appropriate to cast it as mutual evangelization in the sense that, through dialogue, the partners evangelize each other under the impulse and movement of the Spirit of God. This is because the partners in dialogue live — consciously, on the one side; unconsciously, on the other — the same mystery of Christ, active in them through the work of the Holy Spirit.

The encounter and exchange have value in themselves, are an end in themselves. Such encounters presume from the very beginning openness to the other and to God; and along the way they effect a greater openness to God in each through the other. The dynamic is one of conversion, yes — of each to God through the Christic mystery at work in them. The same God speaks in the heart of both partners; the same Holy Spirit is at work in all. Thus they become for each other a sign leading to God. 18

The proper end of the interreligious dialogue is, in the last analysis, the common conversion of Christians and the members of other religious traditions to the same God — the God of Jesus Christ — who calls them together by challenging the one through the others. 19

Thus there is both fruit and challenge in this encounter for Christians. The fruit: we will gain an enrichment for our own faith through an experience in greater depth of certain aspects of the divine mystery communicated less clearly by Christian tradition. The challenge: we will be forced to revise certain gratuitous assumptions, to uproot certain deeply embedded prejudices, or to overturn certain narrow outlooks — in short, to purify our faith. 20

At the heart of our faith is the grateful and joyful assertion that, in this human being, Jesus of Nazareth, a member of our race, God has personally come to meet us on our own level. Jesus places God within our reach and offers to us the gift of divine life. He is God in a human way, and a human in a divine way. Apart from Christianity, God encounters human beings, but the human face of God remains unknown. In Christianity, God encounters us in the human face

17 Ibid., 151
18 Ibid., 228, 241
19 Ibid., 241
20 Ibid., 239
of Jesus who reflects for us the very image of God. While every religion contains an approach to the human person on the part of God, in Christianity God's advance towards us becomes fully human.  

So it is that we can find God at work in everything that is human, in every decent, noble, intelligent thing that people do or say, as well as find God grieving over and sharing in every suffering. For a Christian spirituality rooted in scripture such as John's gospel, all things came to be in the Word that became incarnate, and the Word's taking flesh is a profound expression of God's solidarity with the world and everyone in it.  

There is a light at the heart of everyone which no darkness can overcome. In that comprehensive, uncomprehended light, Christian spirituality finds all things holding together in the grace and truth of the cosmic Christ celebrated in Colossians: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (1.15-17).  

Christians in the exchange of interfaith encounter may have the opportunity to humbly and simply share that the eternal Word of God, become flesh in Jesus of Nazareth, is the source and center of their salvation history. For me personally, his Spirit has shaped and guided the decisions of my life. Other people may report a similar experience and attribute it to other sources. But my own actual history has been formed by the love of Christ. I want to be faithful to that, to him. It is a joy to speak of him to others, a delight to share his good news that we are set free from sin and death, and a privilege to serve him in love with a grateful heart.

21 Ibid., 101, 150
Toward An Iroquoian Christian Ritual

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Is it necessary or even possible to envision an officially approved Iroquoian Christian rite in the Roman Catholic church? Other aboriginal Christian rites? I will explore these questions on a pragmatic level. First, I will recount a theology of adaptation and inculturation explicitly espoused in the Roman church in recent years. Then I will explore three models of inculturation, and suggest what an Iroquoian Christian liturgy might look like by noting riches of Iroquoian cultures which could enhance the Roman liturgy. I will conclude with a suggested procedural regimen to implement such an indigenous liturgy.

A Theology of Inculturation

One experience of the liturgy of the Roman rite in pre-Vatican Council II days was a pride in the relatively stable and uniform patterns of its celebration. We could feel at home in the relatively stable and uniform patterns of its celebration. We could feel at home during Masses celebrated in such different communities as Saskatoon or Hong Kong. As long as we confined ourselves to the Roman rite such uniformity was the norm. If we had chosen to celebrate with Christians in the eastern churches, our manner of celebration would have been quite different.

The early Christian church made adaptations as the process of evangelization spread beyond the Jerusalem church. As the Gospel was preached in India and China, for example, it received the new expression of the evangelized. Without compromising the essential message of Christianity, such a diffusion of the Gospel witnessed both to its universal applicability and, in turn, to the impact that great cultures can have on the Gospel message. Thus we witnessed the expansive outreach of the Good News; it could potentially embrace all peoples, becoming thereby truly catholic, that is, universal. In that process, the peoples embraced contributed by drawing out and making manifest the Gospel’s many hidden riches, which in turn helped make people fully alive.

The history of the Roman church, however, is not that of a continuous ascent toward the recognition of the worth of unevangelized cultures. The Gospel came to Canada clothed in European garments. The mission of evangelization proceeded from a conviction that the Euro-Christian dogmas and celebrations were the only approach to truth and thus normative for all peoples.
Today we have the imperative in Vatican II's document, *Nostra Aetate*, the "Declaration of the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions," to recognize and accept whatever is good and true in any religion. Some linguists and celebrants in local communities have taken this imperative to heart and made adaptations to formal celebrations by including various indigenous sacred rites.

For the Roman church as a whole, the difficulty today concerning different ritual traditions such as the Iroquois is moving from theory into practice, from espousing the legitimacy of multicultural forms to acting upon this idea. As theologian Karl Rahner notes, the church must transcend narrow cultural boundaries and become a world church, not merely a western one. Unless this happens, the church is betraying the meaning of Vatican Council II.

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**Models of Adaptation and Inculturation**

The Roman church has made several responses in order to recognize what is good and true in various cultures. In her outreach the church as a whole used a largely colonialist missionary model in 17th century Canada. In this approach the European-Christian liturgical structure remained essentially intact and permitted only minor adaptations. In this method of evangelization, liturgical forms were transplanted from one cultural milieu into another without question. In effect, the overt or unconscious judgment was made that one cultural form was preeminent in almost every detail and had to supplant indigenous ones. In essentials and in accoutrements such religious practices as auricular confession and the use of fiddle-back vestments had to prevail in the contact with various indigenous cultures.

Adaptation, a second model of mutual response of one culture to another, is more flexible than the colonial one. Prelates still made the judgment that in essentials there is only one way of celebrating Christian rituals. Adaptations to local culture were made, however, in non-essentials, even without explicit formal authorization. In varying degrees, missionaries used and altered Roman liturgical forms, sometimes applying rubrical and canonical norms very loosely. Missionaries engaged in dialogue homilies, for example, built earthen floored chapels patterned on longhouse architecture and omitting the sacristies. Human and biblical realities were presented in indigenous cultural forms.

In Huron culture, for instance, sin was conveyed as unripe corn; Mary and those who honour her were viewed as ripe ears of corn. At a time when rubrical norms rigidly regulated ritual words, actions and materials, these missionaries could be regarded as quite venturesome and creative in bending rules. In this second model, nevertheless, the hegemony of the Europeanized Roman rite remained supreme. The adaptation in non-essentials did not sufficiently

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2 Karl Rahner, "Towards a Fundamental Theological Interpretation of Vatican II," *Theological Studies* 40 (1979) 718, 724
acknowledge the riches and kinship with Christian aspirations that the Huron culture, for example, quite obviously exhibited. Most Jesuit missionaries regarded the Huron notion of oki (spirit with power) in a pejorative way. A more positive acceptance of this notion could have created a rich kinship between Huron and Christian spirituality.³

The third model is an incarnational one advocating inculturation, that is, creating truly indigenous expressions of Christianity. Such a model could result in an Iroquoian Christian at home in Iroquoian culture. Such inculturation could attest to the fact that God can reveal important truths outside of Christianity; such a recognition of worth in these cultures, Joseph Healey notes, would be a sort of Fifth Gospel.⁴

If liturgical inculturation was difficult if not impossible to practise in the 17th century, missionaries could have heeded the directions taken by indigenous peoples themselves. They practised an early acceptance of Europeanized Christianity. They welcomed missionaries as women and men of prayer and regarded Christianity as a new form of celebration which enriched but did not replace their own traditional forms. Missionaries, however, did not affirm indigenous rites in this way. As John Grant notes, "If the measure of success is that most Indians have become Christians, the measure of failure is that Christianity has not become Indian."⁵

Pope John Paul II sanctioned this third inculturation model in his 1984 visit and address to indigenous people, and reiterated it in his visit to Fort Simpson, North West Territories, in 1987: "Thus not only is Christianity relevant to the Indian peoples, but Christ, in the members of his body, is himself Indian."⁶

What Might an Iroquoian Liturgy Look Like?

If Christ is Indian, what might an Iroquoian liturgy, for instance, look like? We cannot discount the fact that some adaptations have already been made on the local level. However, just as the present classical Roman liturgy has the form and content of evolved Greek and Roman culture, the truly inculturated liturgy we are seeking must have an indigenous face. More particularly, such a liturgy will use the Iroquois sense of culture, life experience and felt needs, and their sense of signs, words and feelings. Such an Iroquoian Catholic liturgy will use their time-honoured ritual, symbolism, music, poetry, stories, dramatization, art forms, and the Iroquoian sense of gift-giving.

³ See my Ethnosophical and Ethnolinguistic Perspectives on the Huron Indian Soul (Lewiston NY: Edwin Mellen Press 1991) 70-72, 156-157
⁴ See Joseph G. Healey, "Inculturation of Liturgy and Worship in Africa," Worship 60 (1986) 413
⁵ John Webster Grant, Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1984) 262. See also Achiel Peelman, OMI, "The Church and the Native People in Canada: Indigenous Religions in Canada," unpublished manuscript (Ottawa: Saint Paul University 1988) 71-72
Is it possible, formally and as a Canadian church, to use Iroquoian prayers in baptismal rituals, marriage and funeral celebrations? By advocating a mutual inculturation of Christian-Iroquois ideas and practices we would be following a similarly radical practice whereby Christianity moved out of its birth bed in the Semitic culture and into the African, Byzantine and Roman ones. What we are advocating is not that the Iroquoian culture be Christianized but that Christianity in this particular instance be Iroquoianized, for only then can Christianity be regarded as truly universal.

Christ is visible through his people and through their cultural milieu. In liturgy the expressions of the community make him manifest. If liturgy is the meeting of Christ, such a meeting has meaning only if it relates to the experience of the people. Uniquely cultural experiences can be the substance and foundation for expanded and deepened religious experiences.

A truly indigenous Christianity will give everyone in the Roman-Iroquoian Catholic tradition an insight into and feeling for the unfathomed recesses of the faith. How can the Iroquoian culture in general and in specifics bring into the open unthematized aspects of the mystery of Christianity?

It is important to affirm that Iroquoian spirituality in its foundation is not in opposition to the essential tenets of Euro-Christianity. The Iroquoian affirmation of positive and universal beliefs emanates from their serious long-term search for what it means to be truly human. In this search the Iroquois affirm dimensions of reality beyond the everyday and ephemeral.\(^7\)

More specifically, how can Iroquoian spirituality draw out hidden riches from the Christian treasure chest? What religious insights can the Iroquois contribute—given, for the Holy Spirit knows no cultural boundaries? I delineate eight experiences which could serve as a leaven in Christian rituals.

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**Peace-making**

One peak experience which the Five Nations\(^6\) have focused on for at least five centuries is the necessity of being at peace with one's neighbour. It might appear difficult to claim this focus in the face of recent and long-term Mohawk-white crises, and in the face of a general perception of the Iroquois as fierce warmongers. Missionaries believed that the Iroquoian nature was so thoroughly bellicose that they would believe in Christianity only if war, scalping and killing were also part of the eternal heavenly experience.\(^8\)

The Iroquoian tradition going back to the Deganawidah epic, however, reveals a ritualized charter to accomplish non-violence. This charter acknowledges the

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\(^7\) See my "Algonquian and Huron Transcendence," in William Cowan, ed., *Vingtième Congrès des Algonquinistes* (Ottawa: Carleton University) 292-300. I examine the spiritual transcendence evident in such common experience as eat-all feasts, small pox, and dreams.

\(^6\) The Five Nations in question are Mohawk, Oneida, Onandaga, Cayuga, and Seneca.

following: the problem of the dual tendencies of good and evil in human nature, the existence of vengeance feuds, and the reality of wrong-doing and guilt. In their peace plan, the Iroquois focus on a change of heart, a reconciliation with one another, and an integration of disparate parties into a global community. This movement manifests the consonance of native spirituality with the Judeo-Christian one.

While it might be impossible to perceive a Buddhist quietism among the Iroquois, their epic provides a humanly sensitive and a gradualist plan for peace-seeking and peace-making. From the epic we learn of the devastating effects of blood feuds. Hiawatha, the spokesperson for the prophet, Deganawidah, embodies the desperate condition of individuals and nations, for his disturbed soul leads him to wallow in despair. The movement from killing and despair leads beyond the mere cessation of war. The Iroquoian ritual of Condolence suggests a gradualist approach to achieving harmony with oneself and with one's cosmos. This ritual itself is a spur to achieve peace with different peoples and takes the form of a charter for peace. According to that charter, peace means both embracing those who shed clan and tribal blood, and extending an arm and hand of welcome to those who are non-Iroquois. The ritualized behaviour in the Condolence and Requickening ceremonies provide expansive times for gradual changes of heart as mourners and nations cleanse their sorrowing hearts and return to normal life.

Adoption

A second seminal Iroquois ritual experience is that of adoption. Through the policy of adoption peoples other than the Iroquois were welcomed as quasi-equals within their confederation, sharing in the benefits of the Great League.

Adoption was an ingenious social method, a kind of naturalization not without its coercive elements, which as George Snyderman writes, "broke the bonds of blood loyalty, altered tribal interests, morale and values and paradoxically was responsible for the dominance of Iroquois society." Europeans were surprised at such extensive indigenization, for the adopted sometimes composed up to two-thirds of the population of some nations.

While increases were celebrated through adoption ceremonies, losses were ritualized also. A "mourning war," that is, sorrow for those who died, was one means of dealing with death, and with doing something positive, namely adopting or replenishing the nation's depleted power. Condolence and Requickening rites have both emotional and psychological functions for individuals and society, for these rites face the realities of suffering, death and loss head-on without condoning despair.

The losses due to natural causes and war, and the resulting bereavement and ritual brought the Five Nations together in solidarity. That solidarity, however,
was not narrowly ethnocentric nor monolithic, for the Five Nations' embrace included potentially every nation without discrimination.

The Iroquoian world view is that of multiple interrelationships. If one envisions the other in terms as innately of the same kindred stock, it is fitting and easy to adopt the other as one's relative in the same community; prayers of compassion also flow more easily than if one's perspective is that of the other as an isolated and autonomous individual.

Gift-giving

A third dynamic cultural performance is gift-giving. In Iroquois culture gift-giving continued their own interrelationship and self-understanding. A gift represents, rather than represents externally, the giver's own mind, voice, and word. The person is in the gift, is the gift. In giving a gift one gives oneself, one's very being. Inherent in the gift is a voice, that of the giver, which conveys a meaning, makes a promise. The gift, then, says what it is about, what it inevitably wants to effect. The gift is not merely something external, an object that one can receive, appreciate, express words of thanksgiving for an item that one can put aside. On the contrary, in a more intrinsic way, the gift brings the self, and/or the nation into the other and effects what it signifies.

For the Iroquois some gifts seem to remain external and signify external changes. Others are oriented toward more radical internal changes. Gifts signifying restored health, prosperity, and gifts of bathing water remain external and evoke changes mostly on a physical, external plane. Gifts of wampum, and a hatchet suspended in the air represent internal dispositions of the giver and demand reciprocal dispositions on the part of the receiver. These gifts, external though they are, must in the Iroquoian mind re-present powerful attitudinal conformity.

We must understand a very logical Iroquoian practice on this latter level. Gifts serve to communicate various dispositions in a conventional way, but they also invite and even compel a response prescribed by that gift's meaning. The most demanding response is that of reciprocal giving of one's whole being, akin to conversion in the Judeo-Christian sense. In accepting the gift, then, one becomes like the giver; the giver and receiver are of like mind and heart. As giver and receiver, they are now brothers and sisters.

In a kinship society, people live in close proximity to one another. It is no wonder then that after gift-giving and receiving, the Iroquois were not satisfied with departing, with going separate ways. They desired to stay with their new kinsfolk or to take the new folk with them. Especially during times of intense conflict, ruined crops, and failed shaman interventions, the Iroquois treasured the reciprocal gifts of physical and spiritual bodily presence. They felt the enforced stay of a shaman-priest could benefit his new kinsfolk by using his power to ensure a successful hunt, heal the sick and facilitate a bountiful harvest.

While such physical presences effected what the gifts signified, we cannot discount the prestige and honour that the presence of a missionary provided to

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13 Interview with anthropologist and Huron linguist, John Steckley, University of Sudbury and Humber College, Toronto, September 28, 1993. Author's personal files.
chiefs. Such relationships, especially if they resulted in the chief's conversion, would also be beneficial to the missionaries. In addition, such European and other native presences were an insurance against renewed hostilities, for warriors generally would not attack a village housing one of their own. While Europeans considered such enforced stays as hostage-taking, the Iroquois regarded these interchanges as the epitome of gift-giving. One gives oneself or one's vicarious self, namely a family member or relative.

Other reasons for gift-giving were common. One was political. Recipients of gifts, whether common citizens or village leaders, felt more obligated to follow a gift-giving sachem or peace chief. Another was social and moral. Sachems practiced generosity to redistribute wealth and thereby reduce friction.

The exchange of goods in general, or trading as Europeans commonly called it, and gift-giving should be viewed in the context of amicable peace relations, as reciprocal signs of personal trust. For the Iroquois, the mercantilist mentality is not predominant in such interchanges.

In specific contexts, the Iroquois employ gift-giving in a more understanding, gradual and less demanding way than the perceived hostage-taking. Peace chiefs exhibit heroic patience in their attempts to meld disparate spirits. They have rational souls and "skins five thumbs thick" as they listen to stories of hate and move hearts to mutual acceptance.

In the Deganawidah epic and in this process of gift-giving we return to the theme of peace. Peace was so inseparable from life that the two realities were conjoined. Peace, then, came to be thought of and spoken of in terms of its component elements: as health and reason, soundness of body and sanity of mind; as justice codified to meet particular cases; as authority which gives confidence that justice will prevail. Peace was a way of life, characterized by wisdom and graciousness.

Prayer

For the Iroquois, prayer was an expansion of one's sentiments to the whole cosmos and beyond. The Iroquois held Great Council meetings at least once a year, with great attendance. Delegates from the Five Nations gathered around the central fire, opened it with a prayer of thanksgiving to the Creator, as prescribed by their constitution:

... the Onondaga Lords shall make an address and return thanks to the earth where men dwell, to the streams of water, the pools, the springs, and the lakes, to the maize and the fruits, to the medicinal herbs and trees, to the forest trees for their usefulness, to the animals that serve as food and give their pelts for clothing, to the great winds and the lesser winds, to the thunderers, to the sun, the mighty warrior, to the moon, to

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the messengers of the Creator who reveal his wishes, and to the Great Creator who dwells in the heavens above, who gives all things useful to man, and who is the source and the ruler of health and life. Then shall the Onondaga Lords declare the Council open.\textsuperscript{16}

This prayer attests to feelings of kinship with the earth, air, and celestial beings. All beings are interrelated and form a seamless garment. The tenets of faith remain embedded in the experiential and do not become independent formulations and creeds.

The Iroquois genius leads humanity to the immanent presence of the Creator in one’s experience, in the kinesthetic, in hearing and touching. The secular and holy weave in and out of each other, hinting now at the mundane, now at sacred ritual, but converging in the end. Just as knowing does not involve the priority and preeminence of the conceptual, for “knowing how” is a priority and ground for “knowing what,” so the genesis and rootedness of prayer is in commonplace experiences which contain a richness expanding to the beyond. In its encompassing sweep, prayer attests to the unity of all of creation and harbors an abiding and eschatological yearning to be part of that whole.

While the above prayer manifests the disposition of praise, the following ones from the epic and Requickening Address, based on oral tradition, contain more of a compassionate and exhortatory spirit. Here, as illustrations, are the seventh and eighth addresses or burdens.

The seventh burden is the loss of the sky. The one burdened with sorrow loses the perception of the sky, and consequently of what takes place generally. At least for a short day, the brothers in the tradition of the commonwealth wish to ensure a proper perspective: “Now then, we beautify again the sky for you. It shall now continue to be beautiful. Now, you will do your thinking in peace when your eyes will rest on the sky. The Perfector of our Faculties, the Master of All Things, intended that it should be the source of happiness to mankind.”

The eighth burden is the loss of the sun. The orator of the unscathed visiting sisterhood continues, stating that when a person experiences a great calamity he loses the perception of the sun, knowing nothing of its movements nearer to him. The brothers state:

Now, we attach the sun again in its place for you. This shall happen when the time comes for the dawning of a new day . . . . When the sun shall place itself in mid-heaven then around your person rays or haloes of light will abundantly appear. Then, indeed, shall your mind resume its wonted moods; then also will you remember the many things pertaining to the welfare of your people, your children, your grandchildren.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 38-39

\textsuperscript{17} J. N. B. Hewitt, “The Requickening Address of the Iroquois Condolence Council,” \textit{Journal of the Washington Academy of Sciences} 34 (1944) 74. See also Hanni Woodbury, ed. and trans., \textit{Concerning the League: The Iroquois League Tradition as Dictated in Onandaga by John Arthur Gibson}. Algonquian and Iroquoian Linguistics Memoir 9 (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press 1992). This is a fine work, reeliciting and reconstituting the text based on corroboration by contemporary Onandaga speakers.
The Cosmos

Iroquois teaching emphasizes the ideal of harmonizing oneself with the basic principles of the cosmos, that is, being in tune with creation. This emphasis can provide a balance to a western Christian approach which stresses the sinfulness of individuals, the underlying general condition of humanity in original sin, the proneness of individuals and society toward error, and the judgment that society and individuals, without grace, are deprived and depraved.

Metaphors and Symbols

An Iroquoian Christian liturgy could expand previous conceptions of the Creator and use appropriate metaphors and symbols for the grieving process, forgiveness and gift-giving. The orator in the Condolence rite, for example, employs such expansive terms for the Creator as the Finisher of Faculties, the Master of All, the Sky Rememberer who is responsible for the light of this day. The fifth burden or address in that rite uses a bloody husk-mat, the skin of a spotted fawn and wampum to help in the transition from grieving to healing.

Dreams

In western society, developmental psychology recognizes the necessity and richness of the dreaming process for a balanced conscious life. This importance of dreams has not been fully integrated into western ceremonials, however. For the Iroquois, dreams are a common place cultural part of life. In the forum of dreams, spirits and spirit powers have a unique access and operating capacity. Here spirits from many domains can dialogue with and influence the individual's spirit in a forceful manner. In turn, one's own spirit in the dream event is free to commune with other spirits beyond the confines of space and time. Also, during the dream the individual can converse with himself/herself in an immediate and non-discursive manner. Good dreams are the best medicament for ailments, bestowing cures and giving happiness and health. 18

Transformation

In the social and environmental areas, the western Christian and the Iroquois Christian approaches can be mutual aids. Both approaches highlight many possibilities of building a new heaven and a new earth. The influence of the transcendent being and beings can transform inner life. In turn, the transformed inner life can lead to changes in the external forms of injustice and oppression in individuals and in social reality.

18 I have discussed both the European and Huron/Iroquois approaches to dreams in my Ethnophilosophical, 80-10419
Assumptions and Possibilities

I have delineated eight characteristics of Iroquois ritual culture which could serve as an indigenous spirit in the Christian message and celebration. Such an Iroquoian Christianity would highlight dimensions already present in the western Christian spirit, but would also manifest extended meanings in these new cultural expressions. Thus peace, adoption and gift-giving would concretize the focus on achieving a spirit of accord with one's fellow human being and express that in a kinship bond. Expansive Iroquoian prayers acknowledge and encompass the entire cosmos in new linguistic expressions. Much dialogue and prudential judgment would be required to extend dream experiences and ideals of social outreach into new ceremonial forms.

The indigenization suggested above has taken several items for granted. One is that unity does not necessarily mean uniformity. The Roman church needs to expand its understanding of the meaning of unity, for unity cannot be equated with uniformity. Brotherly/sisterly local churches and communities can give life in different ways to the universal church. Through a gradual but progressive dialogue, local expressions of worship and theology can emerge. The spirit behind enabling permissions and encouragements is that a certain pluralism is not only permitted but desirable.

Another important item is that pluralistic forms of celebration must rise from the grassroots and not be imposed. Authorities must trust that the Spirit is working among the living faith community and must confide in and learn from the inherent worth of other cultures. The pluralistic forms of celebration which emerge should not be the work of a theological or liturgical elite, but the work of the Good News. As Achiel Peelman writes, "Inculturation is, in the here and now, the mysterious fruit born of the encounter between the Gospel and a particular people. This fruit will eventually take the form of a new local church as the locus of a cultural new response to the Gospel." 19

How do indigenous peoples understand the penetration of the gospel into their lives, not the penetration of it embodied in European cultural forms, but in its basic message? In many ways we are still searching for an answer to that question. The Gospel needs time to penetrate into the soul of each culture. 20 Ironically, despite the passing of centuries since early contacts, we still need a waiting spirit, a time for listening in order to feel like poets the power of symbols in indigenous peoples' lives. We need more than ever to ask questions and ponder the answers in a prayerful spirit. Insights will arise only from such dispositions and in such a milieu.

In varying ways Catholic Christian people have a role in encouraging the emergence of inculturated forms of worship. On more institutional levels,

20 Pope John Paul II, The Church is a Creator of Culture (Melbourne: ACTS 1983) 6. Inculturation "presupposes a long and courageous process in order that the Gospel may penetrate the soul of living cultures".
bishops, educators and other Christians are searching to understand indigenous cultures and seeking ways of responding.²¹

Stages of Implementation

To move more directly from theory to action, I now suggest a plan for the gradual implementation of an indigenized Christian liturgy. In doing so I am adapting an actual program for inculturation proposed in India.²²

Atmosphere of Worship

After much dialogue with elders and others regarding appropriate forms of gestures, postures, language imagery, materials of worship, silence, singing, and decoration, there could follow a gradually phased-in program with some experimentation on what creates an atmosphere of worship. There is some precedent for this since the Roman church did approve of adapted forms of its rite for the church in India. In these new rites, the postures for presider and congregation were adapted to local usage, with genuflection replaced by a profound bow, for instance.²³

Prayers

There could follow adaptations to the composition of prayers, including the eucharistic prayer, the celebration of the other sacraments and other celebrations. An aboriginal anaphora could be composed which would trace the marvels of God’s creation, from the earth and its creation to that of the whole cosmos, taking its inspiration from traditional Iroquois prayers. Specific eucharistic prayers could be composed for the celebration of special feasts and events such as Confederacy, calendrical and curing times, as well as for dream ceremonies.

Texts

A third phase in the gradual implementation of an Iroquoian Christian liturgy can consider the use of texts, both written and oral. Consideration can be given to the use of the Deganawidah epic, to other native texts, and to those of the Judeo-Christian heritage. Decisions can be made whether these texts should be used as options, and whether they should be used for the eucharist and the other sacraments and liturgies.

This Iroquois liturgy might serve as a model for other aboriginal native liturgies. Or this liturgy could have a consistent core with adaptable aspects, reflecting the expansive and one mystery of Christ.

²¹ See Dennis Gruending, “Canadian bishops at commission consultation [on aboriginal peoples],” Prairie Messenger 71 (November 8, 1993) 6
²³ Notitiae 48 (1969) 365-374
Conclusion

I have sketched proposed contents and a process of working toward an indigenous Christian liturgy and church. We must recognize, however, that there are many aboriginal people who desire a more traditional type of religious ritual. Others are content with the Roman rite as it is with minor indigenous adaptations. I am not advocating any meddling or imposition in the above areas. Rather, I am advocating dialogue with Iroquois nations about what might be possible and desirable.

Today is a time in which there is much search for ways and places for worshipping, in which there are many absences from the Roman Catholic liturgical attendance on the part of aboriginals and non-aboriginals. Today is not a time to affix blame or point to former golden times. Today is the time to examine vibrant ways that natives might contribute to a church of their own, one which embodies an obvious appreciation of their culture and shows respect for aboriginal peoples through their experiential faith. While we cannot as a church forget our past, like Abraham we have to move to a new land, changing both our locale and our mindset.

Liturgy is the articulation of the Christ event among a people in a culture. Liturgy is authentic if it expresses what the people are. The Gospel mandate is to take up whatever is good, whatever is holy, acknowledge that and make it part of a community. When we perceive native culture as manifesting the goodness and beauty of God, we are extending the wonder of Christianity beyond Roman and Greek cultural forms. In doing this we witness and celebrate the church as catholic, that is, universal, excluding no one and including everyone.
General Intercessions at Baptism

Composing good general intercessions for liturgies of baptism for children is more difficult than preparing intercessions for Sundays. How does one balance concerns for the one or few children who are being baptized (and their parents and godparents) with concerns for other children, other adult members of the church, other needs around the world? How does one refer to baptized children as members of the church? How does one include concerns of justice and the expectation that the child will be brought up to do justice? How does one keep from being trite, innocuous, and bland? It would be good if we as a church shared intercessions composed not only for baptisms, but also for weddings and other special occasions.

The set of intercessions given below is one attempt to be specific and general, hopeful and challenging. It is not the only way to achieve the aims of the general intercessions on special occasions, and certainly they are not perfect. Nevertheless, they may provoke discussion and experimentation.

Response: O God, we hope in you.

Let us pray that Olivier may truly be counted
as a friend of God,
as a living and active member of the church in the Holy Spirit,
as a faithful disciple and witness to Jesus Christ.
Let us also pray for Nathanael his brother,
for other newborn and not yet born infants among us,
and for all children who are sisters and brothers in our community.

Let us pray for Olivier's mother and father, Suzanne and Paul,
as they accept their responsibility to raise him
to know and love the Triune God
and to be a person of love, peace and justice.

Let us pray as well for his godmother and godfather,
as they accept their responsibility to support the family,
and for his grandparents and other relatives,
and for all of us, who are called to be models of faith,
love and justice for Olivier and all children.

Let us pray that as Olivier and all our children grow up,
they may learn to reach out to other children near and far
who are sick, maimed, who receive inadequate health care,
who have to work under inhuman conditions,
who suffer abuse in their homes and in society.

Let us pray that as Olivier and all our children grow up,
they may learn to share what they have with other children near and far
who live in squalor, poverty, and hunger,
who live without adequate clothing or shelter.

Let us pray that as Olivier and all our children grow up, they may learn to stand in solidarity with other children near and far who live amidst war and violence, or on the streets, or in asylums, or as refugees, who have no parents, or whose families are divided.

Let us again pray for all mothers and fathers, grandparents, godparents, and all adult members of our community, that they will support each other in the nurturing of all our children in our church and in our world.
Saints of the Summer

During the long spring and summer months of Ordinary Time, feasts of the saints can receive more attention than they might during the great seasons surrounding Easter and Christmas. Our holy ancestors in the faith are worthy of our attention and respect. Here we focus on three groups of saints: the apostles, the relatives of the Blessed Virgin, and the women saints of July. Of course, there are many others as well.

Feasts of Apostles

From May through September, nine apostles are commemorated in the liturgical calendar. There are two sets of pairs – Philip and James, and Peter and Paul – and the latter feast has a vigil as well as a feast day.

Other apostles are celebrated later in the year: Simon and Jude on October 28, Andrew on November 30, and John on December 27. In addition, there are other feasts of Paul (January 25) and Peter (February 22) early in the new year.

Each feast of the apostles has a special opening prayer, which is given below. They provide an interesting composite picture of these friends of Jesus; they provide as well an appropriate opportunity for our meditation.

May 3: Philip and James

God our Father,
every year you give us joy
on the festival of the apostles Philip and James.
By the help of their prayers
may we share in the suffering, death, and resurrection
of your only Son
and come to the eternal vision of your glory.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

The gospel is John 14.6-14.

May 14: Matthias

Father,
you called St. Matthias to share in the mission of the apostles.
By the help of his prayers
may we receive with joy the love you share with us
and be counted among those you have chosen.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . .

The gospel is John 15.9-17.
June 29: Peter and Paul

Vigil:

Lord our God,
encourage us through the prayers of Saints Peter and Paul.
May the apostles who strengthen the faith of the infant Church
help us on our way of salvation.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . .

The gospel is John 21.15-18.

The Feast Day

God our Father,
today you give us the joy
of celebrating the feast of the apostles Peter and Paul.
Through them your Church first received the faith.
Keep us true to their teaching.
Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . .

The gospel is Matthew 16.13-19.

July 3: Thomas

Almighty Father,
as we honour Thomas the apostle,
let us always experience the help of his prayers.
May we have eternal life by believing in Jesus,
whom Thomas acknowledged as Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit . . . .

The gospel is John 20.24-29.

July 25: James

Almighty Father,
by the martyrdom of St. James
you blessed the work of the early Church.
May his profession of faith give us courage
and his prayers bring us strength.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . .

The gospel is Matthew 20.20-28.

August 24: Bartholomew

Lord,
sustain within us the faith
which made St. Bartholomew ever loyal to Christ.
Let your Church be the sign of salvation
for all the nations of the world.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . .

The gospel is John 1.45-51.
September 21: Matthew

God of mercy,
you chose a tax collector, St. Matthew,
to share the dignity of the apostles.
By his example and prayers
help us to follow Christ
and remain faithful in your service.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . .

The gospel is Matthew 9.9-13.

The Ministry of the Apostles

The medieval church transmitted traditions of the apostles under the title Breviarium Apostolorum. Here they told something of the origins, place of ministry and place of death for each apostle. In addition the names of some of the apostles are interpreted. Here is some of the information from the Breviarium appended to the Sacramentary of Gellone.¹

“Simon” means “obedient.” Peter came from the village of Bethsaida in Galilee and evangelized Rome. He was killed under the Caesar Nero, crucified upside down.

“Paul” means “pious.” Born of the tribe of Benjamin, he was apostle to the Gentiles. He was killed in Rome on the same day as Peter.

“Andrew” means “manly.” He preached in Scythia and Achaia, and was killed by crucifixion in the Greek city of Patras.

James, son of Zebedee, preached in Spain and the West, and was killed by the sword.

“John” means “grace of God.” He preached in Asia [now western Turkey] and in Ephesus.

“Thomas” means “deep, profound.” He preached in Medea [modern Iraq and Iran] and in the distant East. He was killed in India.

Philip came from Bethsaida, and preached in Gaul [modern France]. He was crucified in Hierapolis in Phrygia [modern Turkey] and is buried there with his four daughters.

James, the brother of the Lord, was first bishop of Jerusalem. He was stoned to death.

Bartholomew preached in Lyconia [modern Turkey] and was beheaded by a king of Armenia.

Matthew was from the tribe of Levi, and evangelized first in Judea and later in Macedonia. He died in Persida.

Simon the Zealot first went to Egypt and then became bishop of Jerusalem after James. Under Hadrian he suffered martyrdom.

Jude preached in Mesopotamia and later in Pontus. He is buried in Armenia.

Matthias, after having been chosen to replace Judas Iscariot, preached in Judea.

The Apostles' Creed

Another medieval tradition was to imagine that each apostle contributed one part of the Apostles' Creed. A fourteenth-century treatise known as *The Pore Caitif* was intended for the religious instruction of the laity. Its introduction to the Apostles' Creed reads (in modernized language):

> After the Ascension of Jesus Christ the Holy Ghost taught the apostles all truth needful to the soul, and by the teaching of [the Spirit] the twelve set together twelve articles, the which all that would be saved must steadfastly believe.

> The first article of the belief (sic), saint Peter put into the creed, by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, saying in this wise: I Believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and of earth.²

In various versions of this story, different articles of the creed were attributed to different apostles, except that the first always came from Peter.³ The following is just one example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Apostle</th>
<th>Article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td>I believe in God the Father almighty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>Creator of heaven and earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>I believe in Jesus Christ ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew</td>
<td>Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip</td>
<td>Suffered under Pontius Pilate ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Descended to the dead ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartholomew</td>
<td>Ascended into heaven ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew</td>
<td>Whence he will come to judge ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James (the Less)</td>
<td>I believe in the Holy Spirit ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon</td>
<td>The Communion of the Saints ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jude</td>
<td>The resurrection of the dead ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthias</td>
<td>Life eternal. Amen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of course this is not really the way the Apostles' Creed was composed,⁴ but it makes a nice story, is a useful catechetical device, and takes the apostles seriously.

² Mary Teresa Brady, "The Apostles and the Creed in Manuscripts of *The Pore Caitif*,“ *Speculum* 32 (1957) 323-325
³ Curt F. Buhler, "The Apostles and the Creed,“ *Speculum* 28 (1953) 335-339
Mary's Relatives

During Advent we of course tell about Elizabeth, Zechariah and their son, John the Baptist. In the liturgical calendar we also celebrate the feasts of the Visitation of the two expectant mothers, Mary and Elizabeth, in May, and the birth of John the Baptist in June. In July we then celebrate the feast of the parents of Mary, known in Christian tradition as Joachim and Anne. (In the pre-Vatican II calendar, only Anne was commemorated in July; Joachim was remembered separately in August.) Again, the opening prayers of these feasts are worthy subjects for our meditation.

May 31: Visitation

Eternal Father,
you inspired the Virgin Mary, mother of your Son,
to visit Elizabeth and assist her in her need.
Keep us open to the working of your Spirit,
and with Mary may we praise you for ever.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . .

June 24: John the Baptist

Vigil

All-powerful God,
help your people to walk the path to salvation.
By following the teaching of John the Baptist,
may we come to your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit . . . .

The Feast Day

God our Father,
you raised up John the Baptist
to prepare a perfect people for Christ the Lord.
Give your Church joy in spirit
and guide those who believe in you
into the way of salvation and peace.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . .

July 26: Joachim and Anne

God of our fathers,
you gave Saints Joachim and Anne
the privilege of being the parents of Mary,
the mother of your incarnate Son.
May their prayers help us to attain
the salvation you have promised to your people.
Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . .
Women Saints of July

The liturgical calendar for July is especially rich in women saints; these are five in number. In comparison, one woman saint is celebrated in May, none in June, and three in August. In addition to those proposed for our devotion in the present calendar, we may look back in history and add a few more that were in the pre-Vatican II calendar. Finally, a more extensive list is presented in Butler's Lives of the Saints, a work that is inspired by the Roman Martyrology.

The opening prayers for the feasts of the present calendar suggest themes for our meditation.

July 4: Elizabeth of Portugal. Princess of Aragon and grandniece of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, she died in 1336.

    Father of peace and love,
    you gave St. Elizabeth the gift of reconciling enemies.
    By the help of her prayers
    give us the courage to work for peace among [all],
    that we may be called the [children] of God.
    We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . .

July 6: Maria Goretti. She died in 1902 of knife wounds received while resisting a would-be rapist; she was twelve years old.

    Father,
    source of innocence and lover of chastity,
    you gave St. Maria Goretti the privilege
    of offering her life in witness to Christ.
    As you gave her the crown of martyrdom,
    let her prayers keep us faithful to your teaching.
    We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . .

July 22: Mary Magdalene. This renowned biblical figure is now acknowledged as the first witness to the resurrection.

    Father,
    your Son first entrusted to Mary Magdalene
    the joyful news of his resurrection.
    By her prayers and example
    may we proclaim Christ as our living Lord
    and one day see him in glory,
    for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit . . . .

July 23: Bridget (of Sweden). Wife, mother of eight children, and widow, Bridget founded a religious order and was known as a great mystic. She died in 1373.

Lord our God,  
you revealed the secrets of heaven to St. Bridget  
as she meditated on the suffering and death of your Son.  
May your people rejoice in the revelation of your glory.  
Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . .

July 29: Martha (of Bethany). This patron saint of all who gave hospitality was sister of Mary of Bethany and of Lazarus.

Father,  
your Son honoured St. Martha  
by coming to her home as a guest.  
By her prayers  
may we serve Christ in our brothers and sisters  
and be welcomed by you into heaven, our true home.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . .

Pre-Vatican II Calendar

Several other women saints were celebrated in July until the reform of the calendar in 1969.

July 10: Rufina and Secunda. Two sisters, who in Christian tradition are said to have been martyred in Rome ca. 257.

July 18: Symphorosa and her seven sons. According to legend Symphorosa was the widow of a martyr and lived with her sons near Rome. They were martyred for the faith; the year of their death is not known.

July 20: Margaret. In the East this saint is known as Marina. She was martyred at Antioch in modern Turkey in the early centuries of the church. She was one of the most widely venerated saints during the middle ages, and was especially known as the patron of pregnant women.

July 21: Praxedes. A Roman matron and sister of Pudentiana, she cared for Christians undergoing persecution. A church in Rome is dedicated to her memory; the year of her death is not known.

July 24: Christina. A young woman martyred at Bolsena in Italy under the emperor Diocletian. She is confused with a popular Eastern martyr, St. Christina of Tyre.

July 29: Beatrice. She buried her martyred brothers Simplicius and Faustinus, and some time later was martyred for the faith.

Butler’s Lives of the Saints

Still other women saints are given in the Lives of the Saints for the month of July.

July 2: Monegundis. A native of Chartres, wife, mother of two daughters, and widow, she lived as a recluse. Her cell grew into a monastery of women. She died in 570.
July 3: Mustiola. She ministered to persecuted Christians in Italy, and was then martyred herself sometime in the third century.

July 4: Bertha. Wife, mother of five daughters and widow, she lived in Artois in a monastery she had founded. She died ca. 725.

July 6: Dominica. A legendary figure, she is said to have lived in southern Italy, where she incurred the wrath of the authorities for destroying idols. She is thought to have died ca. 303.

July 6: Sexaburga. A princess in East Anglia, she was queen of Kent for many years and mother of two princes and two women saints. In due course she became abbess of Ely, and died ca. 699.

July 6: Modwenna. An English (or possibly Irish) saint, perhaps of the seventh century.

July 6: Godeleva. A French woman, she suffered long-term violence from her husband, and eventually was killed by his servants. She died ca. 1070.

July 7: Ethelburga, Ercongota and Sethrida. English noblewomen who went to France to learn the monastic life. They died ca. 660.

July 8: Prisca or Priscilla. Mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles and the letter to the Romans, her husband was Aquila. House churches met in their home.

July 8: Withburga. Another noble Englishwoman, she founded a monastery and died ca. 743.

July 8: Sunniva and her companions. Daughter of an Irish king, she and her companions put to sea and were cast up off the coast of Norway. They died sometime in the tenth century.

July 9: Everild. She and other holy women lived in a monastery near York. She died ca. 700.

July 9: Jane of Reggio. Jane Scopelli was born at Reggio in Emilia, and after her parents died she founded a Carmelite convent. She died in 1491.

July 9: Veronica Giuliani. A Capuchin nun in Umbria, she was a great visionary. She died in 1727.

July 9: The Martyrs of Orange. Thirty-two nuns who were martyred at Orange during the French Revolution (1794). While in prison they organized so far as possible a communal religious life, beginning with the office at 7 am.

July 9: The Martyrs of China. During the Boxer Rebellion in the 19th century, a number of Franciscan nuns were martyred (as well as seminarians, priests, a bishop, and numerous Protestants).

July 10: Felicity. Wife, mother of seven sons and widow, she and her sons were martyred in the second century. Felicity was much acclaimed by St. Augustine.

July 10: Amalburga. Two saints by this name are celebrated today. One was a Benedictine nun in France, the other a nun in Belgium. The first died ca. 690, the second ca. 770.
July 11: Olga. A queen, and mother of king St. Vladimir of Kiev, she was one of the first Ukrainians to become Christian. She died in 969.

July 12: Veronica. This name is given to the woman who compassionately wiped the face of Jesus when he fell under his cross.

July 13: Maura and Brigid. According to legend they were British princesses who made a pilgrimage to Rome and on their way home were killed; this happened during the fifth century.

July 13: Mildred. An English noblewoman, she became abbess of Minster-in-Thanet and died ca. 700. She was very popular during the middle ages.

July 15: Edith of Polesworth. An Englishwoman about whom little is known; she perhaps died in the tenth century.

July 15: Anne Mary Javouhey. Shortly after religious communities were allowed again in France after the Revolution, she founded a new order, which spread to many countries. She died in 1851.

July 16: Reineldis. A Belgian nun, she was said to have gone on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and was later killed by raiding barbarians ca. 680.

July 15: Ermengard. A descendant of Charlemagne, she was appointed abbess of a monastery in Bavaria and died in 866.

July 16: Mary-Magdalen Postel. During the French Revolution she was allowed to carry the Blessed Sacrament on her person and to administer it as viaticum to the dying when no priest was at hand. Pope Pius X called her “maiden-priest.” She died in 1846.

July 17: Marcellina. Older sister of St. Ambrose of Milan, she celebrated the consecration of virgins and lived in Rome in a private house with another woman. She died ca. 398.

July 17: Carmelite martyrs of Compiegne. On July 17, 1794, sixteen nuns of this convent were executed under the French Revolution, novice first and prioress last.

July 19: Justa and Rufina. These martyrs were two Christian women at Seville who supported themselves by selling earthenware. After overthrowing the image of a false goddess they were executed, ca. 287.

July 19: Macrina the younger. She was the eldest of ten children of St. Basil the Elder and St. Emmelia. She lived an ascetic communal life with other women in northwest Turkey, and died in 379.

July 19: Stilla. Born near Nuremberg to a noble family, she had built at her own expense a church, which she visited every day. She lived the life of a nun within her father’s household, and died ca. 1140.

July 21: Angelina of Marsciano. A noble Italian woman, widowed after only two years of marriage, she became a Franciscan tertiary and turned her household into a religious community. She died in 1435.

July 23: Romula, Redempta and Herundo. These holy maidens from rural Italy went to Rome and lived in a small house near the church of St. Mary Major. They were well known to St. Gregory the Great, and died sometime in the sixth century.
July 23: **Anne or Susanna.** Born in Constantinople, she lived as a solitary for fifty years, dying ca. 918.

July 23: **Joan of Orvieto.** Orphaned at the age of five, she joined the third order of St. Dominic as soon as she could, and died in 1306.

July 24: **Lewina.** She is supposed to have suffered martyrdom under the Saxons in Britain before their conversion to Christ. Her date is unknown.

July 24: **Christina the Astonishing.** When she was about twenty-two, this Belgian woman had a seizure and was thought to have died. She revived in the middle of her funeral Mass, much to the astonishment of those present. She lived by begging for much of her life, but later joined a convent. She died in 1224.

July 24: **Cunegund or Kinga.** Daughter of a king of Hungary, she was queen of Poland by marriage, and later became a Poor Clare. She died in 1292.

July 24: **Felicia of Milan.** Brought up in Milan, she became a Poor Clare there and later founded a Poor Clare convent in the city of Pesaro. She died in 1444.

July 25: **Thea and Valentina.** A native of Gaza in Palestine, Thea and other Christians were arrested while they were listening to the Holy Scriptures. Valentina, from Caesarea, scolded the judge for torturing Thea, and both were executed in 308.

July 26: **Bartholomea Capitanio.** Born in northern Italy, she was co-foundress of the Sisters of Charity of Loreto, and died in 1833 when only twenty six years of age.

July 27: **Natalia.** She, her husband and several companions, lived in Spain under Moslem rule, and were arrested after visiting the churches of Cordova with their faces unveiled and while assisting at Mass. They were charged with apostasy from Islam and beheaded ca 852.

July 27: **Lucy of Amelia.** A native of Italy, she joined the order of the Hermits of St. Augustine and became prioress of a convent. She died in 1350.

July 27: **Mary Magdalen Martinengo.** Born into a noble family at Brescia, she joined the Capuchins and eventually was elected superior. A noted mystic, she died in 1737.

July 30: **Julitta.** A wealthy widow of Caesarea in Cappadocia (modern Turkey), she refused to sacrifice to Zeus and was executed ca. 303.

July 31: **Helen of Skovde.** A noblewoman of Vastergotland in Sweden, she was widowed and gave her time and goods to the service of the poor and of religion. She was put to death ca. 1160 on a false charge.
Where Have All The Marys Gone?

A number of women named Mary are referred to in the bible, and during the middle ages many of them were commemorated and celebrated in liturgical calendars and martyrologies. Today, however, only two Marys remain in the liturgical calendar of the universal church: Mary the mother of Jesus, and Mary of Magdala. Because the Blessed Virgin Mary has held her own in the liturgical calendar over the centuries, she will not be considered further.

Rather, with respect to the other biblical women named Mary and their place in liturgical calendars, we may think of the popular song, "Where have all the flowers gone . . . long time passing . . . long time ago?" Here we will ask, "Where have all the Marys gone?" In reflecting on the history of biblical Marys in this way we of course raise up the possibility of recovering some or all of these older liturgical commemorations for our own times.

In the middle ages the liturgical calendar was not standardized to the extent that it became after the Council of Trent and is today. A core calendar of saints is revealed in the Roman Martyrology, whose 1946 English edition is not much different than medieval versions, at least so far as biblical saints is concerned.¹ Other medieval traditions are identified in Sabine Baring-Gould's sixteen volume Lives of the Saints² and the four volume Butler's Lives of the Saints.³ The fourth source used here is an expanded English version of the martyrology produced in 1526.⁴

Where Has Mary Magdalene Gone?

In recent years Mary Magdalene may be thought to have experienced an identity crisis. For around 1500 years the Mary Magdalene known and venerated in the church was a composite figure constructed by merging Mary of Magdala (Luke 8.2), Mary of Bethany (Luke 10.38-42, John 11.1-44, John 12.2), and the one or more other women who anointed Jesus of whom we

³ Butler's Lives of the Saints, complete edition, edited, revised and supplemented by Herbert Thurston and Donald Attwater, 4 vol. (Westminster MD: Christian Classics; originally published by P.J. Kennedy & Sons, 1956)
⁴ F. Procter and E. S. Dewick, eds., The Martiloge in Englysshe after the Use of the chirche of Salisbury and as it is redde in Syon With addicyons. Henry Bradshaw Society, 3. (London, 1893)
read in Matthew 26.6-13, Mark 14.3-9 and Luke 7.36-50. Because the anointing woman of Luke 7 is described as "a sinner," the composite Mary Magdalene of tradition was taken to be a sinner, and her sin was usually believed to be sexual in nature: she was often thought to have been a prostitute. This, at least, was the western tradition; the same amalgamation of personalities did not take place in the eastern church.

It was this composite female figure, with her multiple identities, that was known to the people of the middle ages and afterwards. It was this Mary Magdalene who was the object of popular devotion and liturgical commemoration during the medieval era, the post-tridentine centuries, and right up to the publication of the new liturgical books in the early 1970s.

Modern biblical scholarship, however, has shown us that this medieval view is not faithful to scripture. In our own day the "real" Mary of Magdala has been recognized and raised up: she was healed by Jesus (Luke 8.2), traveled with him during his ministry, stood by the cross (Luke 23.55, John 19.35), and was the first witness to the resurrection. This "new" Mary is the person celebrated in the liturgy today, and the recovery of this portrait — more faithful to scripture — is indeed a blessing. Her feast is celebrated on July 22, with John 20.1-2, 11-18 as the gospel of the day.

This reshaping of the liturgical feast of Mary of Magdala on July 22 has some negative aspects, however. One is that we have lost some remarkable and touching insights raised up in the medieval legends about the "old" Mary Magdalene. She was one who showed great love, and one who was deeply penitent. She was thought to have retired to a desert place to live a contemplative life. In due course other women and men were attracted to her company, and a kind of desert community grew up. One of the ways in which this community prayed was by dancing circle dances invented by Mary. She also composed the special music they required; she sang beautifully as her companions danced, and accompanied song and dance on the lute.

As "apostle to the apostles," Mary evangelized parts of southern France; she, Martha and Lazarus had moved there after Jesus' resurrection. She preached, converted, and established churches. Having a kind of apostolic authority, Mary ordained Lazarus to be bishop of Marseilles.

**Where Has Mary of Bethany Gone?**

Another problem that follows from the discovery of the "new" Mary of Magdala, is that we have lost sight of Mary of Bethany. Because July 22 used to be her feast too, that of Martha of Bethany — Mary's sister — was put a week later, on July 29. Today, we still commemorate Martha, but the Mary of July 22 is no longer her sister but another woman entirely.

Might we wish to chose a new day in the liturgical calendar to celebrate Mary of Bethany? Alternatively, July 29 might become the feast of Mary and Martha together. A third possibility would be to include Mary in the medieval feast of Lazarus and Martha (sometimes Lazarus only) that used to be celebrated on December 17.
Where Have the Anointing Women Gone?

Before Vatican Council II we proclaimed the story of the anointing of Jesus's feet by Mary of Bethany on Monday of Holy Week. The anointing of Jesus' head was told at the beginning of Matthew's passion account, used in the liturgy of Palm Sunday. Mark's account of the anointing of Jesus' head was told in the Markan passion narrative, read on Tuesday of Holy Week. The anointing stories of Matthew and Mark were, in the context of Holy Week, very much subordinated to Jesus' passion.

Today we use the same reading from John 12 for Monday of Holy Week. Mark's anointing story is still part of the passion narrative proclaimed on Palm Sunday, year B, at least in the long version. It is omitted from the short version of the reading, however. Matthew's version of the anointing of Jesus, however, has been eliminated completely from the liturgical reading for Palm Sunday, year A.

The anointing of Jesus' feet in Luke's gospel is not part of this evangelist's passion story, but is told as part of Jesus' public ministry (7.36-50). Before Vatican II, this story was used on three days of the liturgical calendar: Thursday of the fifth week of Lent, Ember Friday of September, and July 22, feast of Mary Magdalene; in earlier centuries it was sometimes also read on a weekday during the season after Epiphany. The use of this story on the Thursday before Holy Thursday made the story of the woman who anointed Jesus a kind of anticipation and parallel of the anointing of the apostles by Jesus.

Today, Luke's account of the anointing of Jesus is heard on the eleventh Sunday of Ordinary Time, year C, and on the Thursday of the twenty-fourth week of Ordinary Time. (Because of the variable date of Easter, the eleventh Sunday of Ordinary Time, year C, is sometimes omitted.)

Where Have the Other Easter Marys Gone?

Both at Easter and on July 22 we may focus so much on Mary of Magdala that we are in danger of forgetting that she was not the only woman at the tomb. Matthew 28.1-10 speaks of Mary of Magdala and the other Mary; Mark 16.1-8 refers to Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome; and Luke 24.1-12 names Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women. Medieval tradition tended to speak simply of the three Marys. (In John 20.1-18 there is only Mary of Magdala.)

In medieval days, "Mary Cleopas" had her own feast day, April 9, while "Mary Salome" was commemorated on October 22. The feast of Mary the mother of James was celebrated on May 25. Might we wish to consider restoring these other Marys to liturgical memory?

(The mother of the evangelist Mark carried the name of Mary as well [Acts 12.12], and she had her own feast day, June 29. The house of Acts 12 was identified in the middle ages with the house where the Last Supper was held.)
Where Has Hard-Working Mary Gone?

Another Mary is named in Romans 16.6, which reads, “Greet Mary, who has worked very hard among you.” According to biblical scholars, the term “work” in this chapter denotes ministry in the church, though we do not know exactly what this consisted of; see verses 3, 6, 9, 12 (twice).

Chapter 16 of Paul’s letter to the church of Rome names many remarkable and noteworthy persons, and provides wonderful insights into the early church and its ministry. Unfortunately it is not included in either the Sunday or weekday lectionary. (Certainly some of the proper names included would challenge readers!)

Our medieval ancestors did celebrate some of the women of Paul’s early churches. Thus Prisca (or Priscilla) with her husband Aquila were commemorated on July 8; they are referred to in Acts 18, Romans 16.3, and I Corinthians 16. Syntyche had a feast on July 22 (see Philippians 4), Lydia on August 3 (see Acts 16), Phoebe the deacon (see Romans 16.1) on September 3, and some legendary female relations of Paul on October 11. Tecla (or Thecla) of Iconium was believed to be a co-worker of Paul, especially in ministry to women; her feast was September 23.

Junia the apostle (Romans 16.7), Tryphaena and Tryphosa (Romans 16.12), as well as hard-working Mary (Romans 16.6) and Euodia (Philippians 4), Tabitha (or Dorcas; see Acts 9), the four prophet-daughters of Philip (see Acts 21), and other notable women of the early church were never commemorated liturgically, however. Might we wish to celebrate some of these biblical women in our own liturgical calendars?

Where Has the Prophet Mary Gone?

The greatest Mary of the Jewish scriptures of course is the prophet (or prophetess) Miriam; Moses and Aaron were her brothers. Again, some of our medieval ancestors recognized her as a saint, and celebrated her feast on July 1.

Other female saints of the Jewish scriptures were also remembered in the course of the liturgical year: Eve on January 23; Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah on February 5; the mother of the Maccabees (with her sons) on August 1; Suzanna on August 28; Rahab, Debbora and Ruth on September 1; and Judith, Ruth (again) and Esther on September 14.

This reflection raises a number of questions. Should we be commemorating some of these biblical Marys (and other biblical women) in the liturgical calendar today? Which ones? What criteria should be used? Who should decide? Should they be included in the calendar of the universal church, or in those of individual countries?
At another level we may ask what it means to include (or exclude) this or that biblical or postbiblical person from the liturgical calendar? How do we avoid filling the calendar with saints' days to the point of interfering with the temporal cycle? What impact do saints' days, which are mostly celebrated on weekdays, have on people today? Indeed, we may ask what meaning do saints have for people today? We may not arrive at full agreement soon, but at least the discussion can begin.

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