National Bulletin on Liturgy

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

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

Editor
J. FRANK HENDERSON

Editorial Office:
NATIONAL LITURGICAL OFFICE
90 Parent Avenue (613) 241-9461
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 7B1 extension 276

Business Office:
NOVALIS
P.O. Box 990
Outremont, Quebec
H2V 4S7 (514) 948-1222

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Thirty Good Years
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Introduction

In this issue we pause for a moment to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the National Bulletin on Liturgy. We pause, not out of nostalgia, but to celebrate the work of God in our contemporary liturgical renewal, to reflect and give thanks for what has been accomplished, to look ahead to the task before us, and to recommit ourselves to continued effort and challenge in the years ahead.

The twentieth anniversary of the Bulletin was noted only with a half-page “Happy Anniversary!” in Bulletin 98 (March-April 1985). This note concluded by saying, “As the Bulletin enters its third decade of service of the people of God, we promise that we will continue to do our best to provide a challenging and balanced review to help you to give better worship to the Father, through the Son Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit, and in the holy Church.” This is still appropriate today.

Several people who have been closely associated with the Bulletin over the years, and who have provided leadership nationally reflect on the Bulletin and on the course of liturgical renewal in Canada over these last thirty years. Their articles provide much information and insight regarding the origins and development of the Bulletin.

Several contributors focus especially on the task that still lies before us with respect to liturgical renewal. They name key issues and challenges, and provide notes for an agenda of action.

It is appropriate that this issue also include the latest Roman document on the implementation of Vatican Council II’s 1963 Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. This concerns the question of inculturation, which constitutes a major challenge in the years ahead, not only in parts of the world distant from Canada, but also right here at home.

It is also appropriate to recall that the Roman authorities recognized the Bulletin on the occasion of its 100th issue in 1985, and sent the following letter of congratulation to its then editor, Patrick Byrne.

It is with great pleasure that I offer on behalf of the Congregation for Divine Worship our congratulations on the occasion of the publication of the 100th number of the National Bulletin on Liturgy. In accordance with the wishes of the Council this Bulletin has strived “to promote the liturgical instruction of the faithful and their active participation in the liturgy” (Sacrosanctum Concilium n. 19) by providing those involved in preparing and celebrating the community liturgy with both the official directives of the Church and practical pastoral assistance. I wish to thank Father Patrick Byrne, the Editor, and his Staff for all the work accomplished and offer every encouragement to continue this task of on-going formation and renewal.

(signed) Augustin Card. Mayer, Prefect

God willing, the National Bulletin on Liturgy will continue to serve the church in the continuing renewal of our worship.
A Bulletin for Parishes

James L. Doyle

James L. Doyle is Bishop of Peterborough, and for many years has been a member of the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy.

My memories of the Bulletin go back to its beginnings thirty years ago. I was then a young priest in Windsor and the Bulletin was a godsend to us as we set about the work of implementing Sacrosanctum Concilium in the liturgical life of the parish. I think this was one of the best characteristics of the National Bulletin over the years: it was oriented to parish life. I remember discussing this with Monsignor Pat Byrne, long-time editor of the Bulletin. He explained this by saying: "Everything I write, and everything I edit, I ask myself: 'Would it work in Douro?'" Douro is a marvellous rural parish where Monsignor worked as a young priest and where he had done so much work along with his venerable pastor, Monsignor McCarthy, to promote liturgical worship. I think that this quality has been the great reason why the Bulletin has been so successful and why it has survived so long. As a bishop and a member of the Liturgical Commission, it has been a privilege to work with Monsignor Byrne and Dr. Frank Henderson, the present editor. They are both gentlemen with a vast repertoire of liturgical knowledge and a burning desire to make our liturgy all that it should be. The Church is fortunate to have their ministry.

One other quality of the Bulletin is the immense amount of information that it has contained over the years. The late beloved Bishop James Mahoney of Saskatoon used to love cogitating up some liturgical matter and then asking Monsignor Byrne if this was in any Bulletin. Monsignor, with his fabulous memory, would let fly with a series of Bulletin numbers in which the information was to be had. I never remember Monsignor Pat Byrne ever being stymied. It is so true. Its indices are so carefully edited and they are always the first place I look for resource material on liturgy and pastoral matters.

As a member of ICEL Board of Directors, and latterly of the executive, I have come to realize that our Canadian Bulletin is also an international publication. So often one of the bishops on the Board mentions it and how it is used in their respective countries to animate liturgical and parochial life. It is always pleasant to hear these laudatory comments.

There have been many ups and downs in the life of the Bulletin. This is a time, however, to rejoice in its solid accomplishments. Its editors deserve our gratitude as a Church for their labours. May it continue to serve the liturgy in Canada. May it continue its parish-centered thrust.
The Early Days

Len L. Sullivan

Len L. Sullivan is a presbyter of the archdiocese of Regina. He was director of the National Liturgical Office for many years, and now lives in Regina.

In December 1969, when I arrived at the secretariat of the Canadian bishops to direct the National Liturgical Office, I discovered that the Bulletin was part of my work. Since the Office had been inoperative for six months, due to the resignation of Fr. Bernard Mahoney of Toronto, the Bulletin was correspondingly late and overdue. Some of the subscribers were unhappy, and a few were on the warpath, considering the money they'd put out for an annual subscription.

First, a word about Bernard Mahoney. He was professor of moral theology at St. Augustine's Seminary, and had been cajoled into part-time direction of the National Office in 1964. For five years, he had tried to siphon enough time from his seminary schedule to found and direct the most conspicuous of CCCB offices following Vatican II. He wisely chose an advisory council of liturgists, church musicians and pastors; this council met annually under the episcopal supervision of Archbishop Michael O'Neill of Regina, Saskatchewan; Bishop Emmett Carter of London, Ontario; and Archbishop James Hayes of Halifax, Nova Scotia.

I remember Bernard Mahoney with full respect. He was of firm convictions, had a gift of good humor, and was a man of patience. How he ever found time to edit the Bulletin is a mystery and a tribute to his determination that the clergy and laity would have an authoritative instrument for study as the liturgical reform unfolded.

Quite frankly, when I arrived at the Liturgy Office in 1969, I did not know what to do about the Bulletin. I was no editor. To make matters worse, the editor of the Ordo (later called Liturgical Calendar) also resigned, leaving me a second problem. And the third complicated project, one in which I felt at home, was well along in its development, the first edition of Catholic Book of Worship. Unless the hymnal succeeded, liturgical direction would fall by default to the missalette industry.

It so happened that providence took me back to London, Ontario, to Saint Peter's Seminary, where I had enjoyed seven years of liturgical wellbeing. There was no rationale for many of its liturgical customs, but everything was undertaken with style and reverence.

The seminary visit took me to Marcel Gervais' room, where I found another visitor there, Pat Byrne. Since we had all been together in studies leading to ordination, there was lots to talk about.

I mentioned the problem of editing the Ordo. Pat assured me he could come to Ottawa and put the whole book together in a fortnight. He did exactly as promised, and translated the Latin text into English while he was at it. I asked him if he'd like to tackle the Bulletin as well, and to the enduring good of the
anglophone world, Pat agreed. The first Bulletins were high-class amateur work, but once Pat began his studies in liturgy at Notre Dame University, the quality of his work became fully professional. The CCCB's reputation rose on the basis of Pat's solid research and his vision. Some of the issues were reprinted again and again; all were well worth keeping. Pat Byrne did the Church in Canada a truly heroic work. During his long stay at the CCCB Secretariat, he also edited all the Canadian liturgical books for altar use and for the laity. His succinct rubrics gave a tight order to the Canadian ritual books, and his much admired work for ICEL more than honored our obligations on the international level.

I often wished that the CCCB had been able to engage a graphic artist for the Bulletin, and perhaps a photographer as well. The Bulletin's content is always solid, but its style is minimal and not enticing. I felt that our outreach to liturgy commissions and parish committees would have been strengthened by something better than page after page of text, but I realize that this would probably double the work for the editor and double the cost of the booklet. Economics must preside if one wants continuity.
Thirty Years of Blessing

Regis Halloran

Regis Halloran was director of the National Liturgical Office in the 1980s. At present he is chancellor of the diocese of Antigonish.

Thirty years of blessings and gifts bestowed upon the Church in Canada! For thirty years, the National Bulletin on Liturgy has been integral to the liturgical life of the Church in Canada. For many it has been an indispensable source and guide for the liturgical reform launched at Vatican II. It has initiated bishop and pastor, choir director and cantor, reader and server into the great mystery of faith – the Paschal Mystery – the dying and rising of Jesus of Nazareth. Added to this is its pastoral tone, which speaks to the residents of downtown Dingwall and Honey Harbour; to those who live in the highrises of Toronto and Edmonton; and to the inhabitants of remote communities in the northern reaches of our vast land. Not to be forgotten is its outreach to peoples of other churches, continents and cultures. That it is highly regarded in academic circles has been acknowledged again and again. Not only has it initiated the beginner, it has nurtured the neophyte on the story of liturgy extending over the centuries. Its exactness to detail and counsel given are outstanding traits. Its fidelity to teaching the Way is of the highest order.

Has the Bulletin challenged? At times in dramatic fashion. But always in tune with the official documents of the Church on the universal, national and diocesan levels. Has the Bulletin veered over the “yellow line”? Yes, on occasion! But never has it gone off the road.

What cause for thanksgiving this is for all members of the community of faith, from the Atlantic to the Pacific and to the Arctic! A faithful and constant friend is of inestimable value. Such a friend walks side by side with us in seasons both quiet and stormy. Support and counsel are imparted to celebrate the great deeds and passages of God among us. Thanks be to God for a true friend, the National Bulletin on Liturgy! A faithfilled messenger or ambassador is a “pearl of great price.” Such has been the NBL as it brings to those ready to listen and hear the proclamation of faith in the setting of prayer. “Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.” Again and again, this Paschal proclamation of faith easters in us when the great assemblies and convocations are gathered together to do the great deeds of God. Thanks be to God for this faithful messenger of hope. Catechesis rooted in these mysteries has been at the heart of the mission engaged in by the National Bulletin on Liturgy. To recall catechesis given on the sacraments of initiation (baptism, confirmation, eucharist), the healing sacraments (reconciliation, anointing of the sick), the sacraments of service (marriage and orders) is like going to a reference library and finding great nuggets of gold.

Who can forget the teachings given on music in the liturgy, church art and architecture, blessings, ecumenism and liturgy, the family, culture and liturgy? Thanks be to God for this goldmine of golden catechesis which continues to be mined by new and rising generations.
John the Baptist Room

Memories many, Yes! For a little while, come and visit some of the rooms of the library containing the National Bulletin on Liturgy Library. The first stop on this tour will be the “John the Baptist Room,” which predated the arrival of the National Bulletin on the Canadian scene. In this room we find a volume entitled “Liturical Renewal.” This volume contains the documents issued by the Holy See and the Canadian Episcopate during 1963-1964. The then Bishop G. Emmett Carter, Bishop of London and secretary of the episcopal commission on liturgy, in his letter introducing this series states: “The recurring themes in these documents is that it can never be sufficient simply to make the external changes indicated in the decrees of the Church, but that a renewal of oneself and of one’s life of prayer must go hand and hand. The prime requirement of this constitution on the liturgy is study, contemplation and understanding. It is not then surprising that the whole movement of the present renewal of the liturgy should be in terms of a common prayer of participation by listening, by speaking and singing.” True then and true now!

The table of contents of this early documentary service on the liturgy gives an overview. Contained therein is the Constitution De Sacra Liturgia, the Motu Propria Sacram Liturgiam and the early decrees of the Canadian Episcopate. These decrees have reference for the application of the Vatican Council Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Decrees 1, pages 61-65). Other decrees follow, giving direction to the use of the vernacular in the liturgy (for example, rules governing the reading of the Epistle and Gospel in the vernacular) and practical norms of celebrating Mass according to the Instruction for the implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.

The Red Room

The second room we visit in our National Bulletin Library may be called the “Red Room.” This room contains Bulletin nos. 1-31, April 6, 1965, to December 30, 1970. And what a rich menu it offers to those ready to feast at the table of God’s delight. Again it continued to provide to the Church in Canada the latest documents (apostolic constitutions, decrees, instructions, rituals, etc.) following on the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. A quick visitation of this room gives a taste for some of the happenings in those great years of liturgical renewal. To name a few:

• The rites to be observed in the Concelebration of Mass and for the Distribution of Communion under Both Kinds (see Bulletin 3). What momentous events these were at the time! The restoration of these liturgical practices dormant for centuries now became part of liturgical practice. The gradual implementation of these happened and in some places is still ongoing.

• Who can forget the updating of the Rites of Mass! (see Bulletin 4). Looking at these today, one wonders what has transpired over the years in the manner of celebrating Mass. They freeze in time a historic development making possible later adjustments and clarifications in the manner of celebrating Mass. A quick look at the recapitulation of these rubrical changes for the celebration of Mass gives some idea of what is taking place: “The server no longer kisses the cruets; the Sanctus is said without bowing, and the sign of the cross is not made at the word Benedictus. The ringing of the bells is suppressed. The Last Gospel and the Leonine prayers after Mass are suppressed.”
• In the letter from Cardinal Lercaro, President of the Concilium for the Implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy sent to the episcopate on June 30, 1965, these words are found: "It does not seem presumptuous to say that Vatican II will go down in history as the Council which so courageously brought about a reform of the sacred Liturgy, giving it a form at once more splendid and effective. If anyone of us were to describe, sincerely and objectively, what has taken place in the churches of the world . . . one would use the words: 'Mirabilia Dei.'" (see Bulletin 5).

• This same issue records a significant development in Canada: the establishment of the National Council on Liturgy. To quote directly this announcement: "The Episcopal Liturgical Commission, English sector (Their Excellencies, the Most Reverend M. C. O'Neill, President, F. J. Klein, G. Emmett Carter, Secretary), recently announced the formation and composition of a National Council on Liturgy. This organism, which will constitute the counterpart of the Council already organized in the French sector last January, will like the latter serve the Canadian Hierarchy, in general, and Episcopal Liturgical Commission, in particular, in a role of study and action." Members of the first National Council on Liturgy were: Revs. W. O. McCallum (Edmonton), L. Sullivan (Regina), T.H. Fournier (Toronto), J.J. Farrell, S.J. (Hamilton), J.B. O'Donnell (London), Everett MacNeil (Antigonish), Clement Adams (Sault Ste. Marie), Bernard MacDonald (Montreal). Music members were: Revs. Peter Somerville (Toronto), Robert Gurney (Kingston), Marcel Gervais (London), Joseph Toole (Calgary), Terrence Lynch (Antigonish), B. Leboldus (Regina), Dom Basil Foote, O.S.B. (Mission City, B.C.). One can first see the benefits of this Council in the recommendations made by the music section for the singing of the assembly at Mass and the role of the organ in the eucharistic celebration (see Bulletin 8).

To this day the National Council for Liturgy continues to serve the Canadian Hierarchy and, in particular, the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy. Its thirty years of service has helped to bring vision and direction to assemblies of worship gathered throughout the country. As one who served for a time on this Council, I can justly say I received more than I brought to the Council – the gifts of commitment, enthusiasm, generosity, learning and kindness rooted in the liturgical action.

• A look at Bulletin 10 gives us a statement of the Canadian Episcopate on the Liturgy of Penance. In this statement, the value of communal celebration is stressed, showing how the ecclesial dimension and the proclamation of the Word of God is at the heart of the celebration even as the individual rite is celebrated.

Pope Paul VI, in addressing the members and consultors of the commission for implementing the ecumenical council's Constitution on the Liturgy, spoke these powerful words on October 31, 1966: "Again, this effort at adapting the forms and language of the holy rite to pastoral requirements, to the catechetical aims of worship, to the spiritual and moral formation of the faithful, to the need for unity with God, to the ability of the sacred sign to be understood and experienced in its specific religious virtue, demands of you great wisdom, experience and charity. It demands this of you who are artisans of the new liturgy and the discoverers of its buried treasures; of the new liturgy, where we wished to see beauty and simplicity, loftiness of thought and charity, contents and brevity, the echo of ancient centuries and the voice of the new times.
joined together in a new harmony! The Church of God entrusts to you this sublime task!" (see Bulletin 10). These words of Paul VI, spoken nearly thirty years ago, are most apt for our time and for those charged with liturgical leadership. To be the artisans of the new liturgy and the discoverers of its buried treasures is the task of all peoples for all ages.

- The National Bulletin has been a trailblazer in uncovering the richness of Blessing. The beginnings of its efforts is the Blessing approved for the Canadian Flag (see Bulletin 13). The commitment to bring blessing to the forefront of liturgical life continued later in the Bulletin, eventually resulting in the publication of the Book of Blessings.

Noted also in this issue is the decision of the Episcopal Commission on Liturgy to adopt in principle the project to publish the Ordo in the vernacular (English and French editions), for use in all dioceses of Canada (April 7, 1967). This decision has resulted in the publication since then of Guidelines for Pastoral Liturgy. The GPL has played a significant role in providing pastoral guidelines for the celebration of liturgy. As well, it coordinates the family of liturgical books published in Canada and provides invaluable help to liturgy planners and those engaged in the various ministries.

- Bulletin 14 holds special memories. Contained herein is the Funeral Rite of Adults: "An Experiment." This rite was used and evaluated in a number of dioceses throughout Canada. Eventually the Green Book of the Funeral Rite came to be a first generation ritual book. To have the permission to engage in this experiment was both exciting and hopeful. Here an opportunity would be given to see what adjustments would be necessary in the rites, making them more helpful in local pastoral situations. One saw a number of these approved for usage in Canada. With the second generation Order of Christian Funerals, this principle of adaptation is much more evident (see Bulletins 119, 127, 132). These issues contain a commentary on the revised rite of funerals, the reasons for these revisions, the new rites and pastoral notes, alternatives and options. Content, structure and ministry for Christian funerals are discussed in great depth. To have been part of these two projects from the ritual and pastoral vantage points has enriched my understanding and appreciation of celebrating Christian death.

- The Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery (Bulletin 17) continued to develop a new awareness of the eucharist as the centre of the liturgy and the whole Christian life. Bulletin 18, on the Canon of the Mass in English, gives us the last stage of the Mass in English.

- Helpful then and more helpful now is Bulletin 20, which gives directives from the Episcopal Commission on the Liturgy for the Prayer of the Faithful. It should be a requirement of all liturgical committees to revisit this excellent and timeless bulletin that gives directives, practical helps and historical notes for a deeper understanding of this element of the eucharist. Again this is addressed in a most helpful manner in Bulletin 121. Together these can serve as a "bible" for those charged with the responsibility of composing the general intercessions and the prayer of the faithful.

- Twenty-five years ago, Bulletins 21 and 22 contained the Experimental Rite for the Baptism of Adults in Several Stages of the Rite of the Catechumenate for Adults. At that time the rite was used only where authorized by a local Ordinary who was participating in the experiment. Having this rite available for
study and reflection at this early date brought many in touch with what is proving to be a Rite that is impacting in ways known and still unknown upon church practice and thinking in Canada. I recall attending a conference on this rite in Boston in the mid-seventies. When I mentioned this to a bishop, he counselled: “Do not mention this to the priests of the diocese.” A long way we have come, but the spiritual journey of conversion progresses onward.

Bulletin 112, March 1988, Celebrating Initiation, presents a clear picture of the process on initiation and its rites, and helps us see the ways our community can grow in sharing and celebrating the Christian faith. Being in a parish for six years 1986–1992 gave me the blessing of this ritual. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults contains all the elements necessary to effect the total conversion of communities of faith. But this will take time – a lifetime and more.

• One last comment from the “Red Room.” The provisional rite for the ordination of deacons, priests and bishops is found in Bulletin 26, March 26, 1969. I recall using this rite in the ordination of priests within the diocese. What a gift it was! It helped express more clearly the holy things which they signified and enabled those gathered for the celebration to understand them with ease and to take part in this fully, actively, and as befits a community. During the past two years I have been on a task group studying possible adaptations to the new revised rites for ordination. Again this has been a special grace. From experience, new insights are gained into ancient rituals and doctrines; new modes of expressing these become possible.

• It is significant to note that the Editorial Office for the Bulletin during this period of time was located at 1048 1/2 Kingston Road, Toronto, Ontario. Fr. Bernard Mahoney at that time served as part-time Director of the National Liturgical Office. Through his devoted labours and wisdom, his love and understanding of the liturgy, he brought to the Church in Canada new visions for liturgical prayer and the celebrations of the great mystery of faith.

The Green Room

For over a year, the National Bulletin was not published. It came back to life with Bulletin 32, March 1972. Green in colour, this signified new hope to provide assistance in helping the Church in Canada to realize the tremendous importance of liturgy in the life of Christians. Under the guidance of Fr. Patrick Byrne, a presbyter of the diocese of Peterborough, and with its Editorial Office at 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, the new challenge was expressed well in these words: “The task of this Bulletin will be to provide thought about liturgy and its needs in Canada, rather than provide solutions. It will work for constructive, developmental criticism, leading to a better understanding and celebration of the liturgy. The Bulletin will seek to promote a deepening of the spirit of the liturgy, as well as passing on news and information on developments of importance . . . . Our concern will be primarily pastoral.” Have these dreams and goals been realized? History and time will tell.

Patrick Byrne remained editor of the Bulletin for sixteen years, editing Bulletins 32–111. When he retired, 5000 subscribers in forty countries were making use of the Bulletin. The newly appointed editor, Dr. J. Frank Henderson, paid tribute to Patrick Byrne: “All this is a credit to Patrick Byrne’s diligence, energy,
discernment, scholarship and pastoral concern." The efforts of Pat were recognized by the Holy See in October 1984, when he was made a-Monsignor: The Gospel that Pat selected for the occasion, Mark 10.41-45, illustrated well the call of leadership with service: "For the Son of Man himself came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10.45).

This tour of the Green Room will be limited by time and space. The major stopping points that are of interest to me will be highlighted.

• Bulletin 32 indicates significant developments and directions for liturgy in Canada. Taking as a starting point Karl Rahner's thought on prayer, "Prayer is the most decisive word a person can say," the Bulletin presents a working paper given at the Atlantic Liturgical Conference meeting on January 12, 1973. This paper used today could provide solid material for discussions at parish liturgy committee meetings.

• What becomes a central focus in the NBL is the riches of the liturgical year. Beginning here and in subsequent issues down to our time, the understanding of the liturgical year is presented as essential for the authentic celebration of the liturgy.

• Bulletin 32 records the organization of diocesan liturgy commissions into regional conferences which took place in 1971. These groups which were established for mutual support, shared concerns and achievements. These conferences have been instrumental in sponsoring educational projects for the member dioceses. Three conferences were established: The Western Liturgical Conference, chaired by Rev. Albert Lafrenière: the Central, chaired by Rev. Mel Schaefer; the Atlantic, chaired by Rev. Regis Halloran. In 1996 these conferences will celebrate their 25th anniversary. They continue to give solid leadership to liturgy in the regions, thereby contributing to the national mandate of the Canadian bishops.

• The first of a series of lenten Penance Celebrations is presented in Bulletin 32. This and following celebrations for Advent and Lent have assisted and continue to assist parishes in planning these celebrations. Later these were compiled in one publication, Penance Celebrations, and published by the Publications Service.

• Again in Bulletin 32 and following ones, the mandate for unity among the churches as expressed in the Constitution on Sacred Liturgy (no. 1) is taken seriously. It is stated thus: "Liturgy and ecumenism go together in the work of the Lord. The Vatican Council sought to foster everything that could contribute to the unity of Christians and to increase the strength of all aspects of the Church which would encourage all to become members." Beginning here and remaining faithful throughout to this mandate, the Bulletin has done its best "that all may be one." Bulletin no. 78, Ecumenism and Liturgy: I; no. 98, Sacraments and Ministry; no. 104, Ecumenism and Liturgy: II; and no. 82, Eucharist: Worship '81 are indicators of this.

Again the direction given in these bulletins is confirmed in Ut Unum Sint, the Encyclical Letter of John Paul II on commitment to ecumenism (May 25, 1995): "Significant progress in ecumenical cooperation has also been made in another area, that of the Word of God. I am thinking above all of the importance for the different language groups of ecumenical translations of the Bible. Following the promulgation by the Second Vatican Council of the Constitution
Dei Verbum, the Catholic Church could not fail to welcome this development. . . . Corresponding to the liturgical renewal carried out by the Catholic Church, certain other Ecclesial Communities have made efforts to renew their worship. Some, on the basis of a recommendation expressed at the ecumenical level (cf. Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* [January 1982]), have abandoned the custom of celebrating their liturgy of the Lord's Supper only infrequently and have opted for a celebration each Sunday. Again, when the cycles of liturgical readings used by the various Christian Communities in the West are compared, they appear to be essentially the same. Still on the ecumenical level, very special prominence has been given to the liturgy and liturgical signs (images, icons, vestments, light, incense, gestures). Moreover, in schools of theology where future ministers are being trained, courses in the history and significance of liturgy are beginning to be part of the regular curriculum. These are signs of convergence which regard various aspects of the sacramental life.

"Certainly, due to disagreements in matters of faith, it is not yet possible to celebrate together the same Eucharistic Liturgy. And yet we do have a burning desire to join in celebrating the one Eucharist of the Lord, and this desire itself is already a common prayer of praise, a single supplication . . . . At times it seems that we are closer to being able to seal this 'real though not yet full' communion. A century ago who could even have imagined this possible?"

• Another Bulletin which has served parish liturgical life well is no. 35, *Parish Liturgy Committees*. This Bulletin is still recognized as one of great assistance. Let's revisit it!

• Bulletin 79 (May-June 1981) begins to address the pastoral situation of the growing number of communities in Canada where no priest is able to come to lead the Sunday celebration of the eucharist. It speaks to the question of selecting and training men and women to lead the people of God in Sunday liturgy. It offers models for celebrations to help those who are called to plan and lead these celebrations. Subsequent issues of the Bulletin continue to provide helpful reflections and assistance for this growing reality in many dioceses of Canada. (See also Bulletins 119, 123, 129, 131, 134.) This topic will continue to have high priority on the liturgical agenda on into the third millennium. Again to revisit these bulletins will provide sound theological reflection and direction for those responsible for leadership in this area.

• Culture and Liturgy has become a part of the contemporary liturgical agenda. Invited by the Second Vatican Council to bring the gifts of our culture into our worship, this invitation is gradually being received. As Jesus lived in the context and culture of a particular people, so do we. To discern what in this culture is valid to bring into worship is done respecting ritual developments, theological and historical realities. Bulletin 95, in beginning to address some of these issues, along with Bulletins 105 and 133, gives impetus and helps to do this in the right way. Again this will remain of great importance to the Church in Canada with its diverse cultural mosaic.

• Another area considered consistently in the Bulletin has been the area of "liturgy and life" (see Bulletins 96, 120, 121). Flowing from the prayer life of the worshipping community is a commitment to serve those in need and to work for justice and peace in our communities and beyond. The Bulletin shows how the liturgies of the Christian people affirm, celebrate and promote human life.
The Brown Room

Moving on to the “Brown Room,” one meets an old friend and colleague, now the third editor of the National Bulletin on Liturgy. Dr. Frank Henderson, recognized scholar, writer, lecturer and researcher on matters liturgical, took up this challenging position in March 1988, with the publication of Bulletin no. 112. Frank also chaired the National Council for Liturgy from 1980 to 1985. In his opening tribute to Monsignor Patrick Byrne, the retiring editor, Frank spoke of his hopes for the future of the Bulletin: “I hope to be able to build on the foundations that Patrick Byrne established so well, though my style and approach will necessarily be somewhat different from his. There will be both continuity and evolution in the forthcoming issues of the Bulletin.” With no. 112, brown became the colour of the cover, and new type styles and sizes are used.

It was most fitting to begin the Bulletin again by considering Initiation. Using the then newly revised Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Bulletin 112 proceeds to present a clear picture of the process of initiation and its rites. It shows how the community takes part in these rites, thereby growing in faith.

A quick tour of this room shows us how the Bulletin continues to address the liturgical concerns of pastor, choir director, and parent. While remaining pastoral in orientation, it takes the reader to historical and theological roots of liturgy in order to ponder better the great mysteries of faith. The editor has called forth many writers from various parts of Canada to contribute their knowledge, insights and spirituality with many others through the pages of the Bulletin. The reader is continually updated on recent happenings in the field of liturgy. For example, Bulletin 128, Catholic Book of Worship III; no. 132, pages 42-47, “Questions About Confirmation”; no. 120, pages 61-64, “Reverence at the Eucharist Today”; no. 135, Reconciliation in our Broken World; and no. 131, The Sunday Lectionary; illustrate this well.

It has been good to rummage around the various rooms of the library of the National Bulletin on Liturgy. To rediscover the “nuggets of gold” of past years and to find the new ones brings renewed excitement and hope for the community of faith in our times. It goes without saying that in a constantly changing society and world, the task of the Bulletin remains awesome. Alienation from the Church is increasing; lessening appreciation of the sacred in life is decreasing. The task of the Bulletin to speak to people in these times is ever more necessary. But the Bulletin will continue to unwrap the gifts of sacraments, prayer and spirituality, music and movement arts, culture and justice, technology and celebration, symbol and imagination, music and the dramatic arts. In turn, the great messenger of hope will abide always with us as we continue to celebrate the Great Mystery of Faith, the Easter Mystery.
The Next Thirty Years

John G. Hibbard

John G. Hibbard is a presbyter of the archdiocese of Kingston and pastor of St. John Bosco parish in Brockville, Ontario. He was director of the National Liturgical Office from 1990 to 1994.

Looking back at the liturgical renewal since Vatican II and the important role that the National Bulletin on Liturgy has played in that renewal, I would like to offer some reflections on how we have implemented the main initiative of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy:

In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy, the full and active participation of all the people is the aim to be considered before all else, for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit . . . Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of liturgy, and to which the Christian people, 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people (1 Peter 2.4-5) have a right and obligation by reason of their baptism'. (n. 14) 1

Since this is the heart of liturgical renewal and has been the main thrust of the National Bulletin on Liturgy, it is the yardstick for evaluating all that has been done and points us to the future and to the task that lies ahead in the next thirty years.

I do not think we have realized the revolutionary character of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. If liturgy is the celebration of the whole Church, then it follows that the assembly is the prime celebrant of the liturgy. It is not that we cannot or have not articulated this principle: we have; every book on liturgy quotes paragraph fourteen of the Constitution. But I believe that we do not realize its full implications or understand that it is a complete turnabout in the attitude and manner with which we approach the celebration of liturgy. We have changed some of the language that we use. For example, while at one time we called the priest the celebrant of the liturgy, the reality of the Constitution has conditioned a change of terminology so now we call the priest the presider or presiding celebrant. The assembly is now recognized as the celebrant of the liturgy. Nevertheless, it has been more difficult to comprehend the deeper implications of the basic principle of the Constitution. Two questions will illustrate this point. If the assembly is the celebrant of the liturgy, how do we reconcile that liturgy is the action of God through Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit? How do we define the relationship of the ordained to that of the assembly in a manner that recognizes the vital and unique role that each plays in the liturgy?

1 Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy 14
The lack of a strong baptismal basis for the understanding of liturgy hinders our view that we are one in Christ, and Christ is among us. It is Christ who is the high priest of the liturgy, and we are members of the body of Christ. We are united to Christ by baptism and in the liturgy we unite our action of worship to the worship of Christ. Therefore, while affirming that liturgy is the action, we also affirm the action of the assembly. This lack of baptismal understanding has caused some to choose one principle over the other or to think that we must choose one over the other. As a result, some see celebrations only as a human activity, while others view liturgy as an act so divine that human beings can only be present in a passive role.

It might be said that in popular perception, ordination is still seen as the basis for liturgical participation. The only difference is that we might have admitted a few more people into that category. The perception of our full, active and conscious participation that the Constitution spoke of is often seen only in terms of the number of ministers that are active within any given celebration. It is true that the restoration of liturgical ministry to the laity is an important component of the renewal of the Church, but it is not the heart of the reform of Vatican II.

The participation of the baptized in liturgical ministries is not the context of the important declaration of paragraph 14 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. For many, this has been the extent of the liturgical renewal: more ministers equals more participation. This may explain why there is a basic urge on the part of those who help prepare liturgy to get as many as possible involved in doing something. Think of some of the first communion celebrations you have attended. Is it not a better celebration when all the children have something to do? This attitude reflects that we have taken a step forward. The view of the priest’s role before Vatican II has been extended to those who minister to the assembly. But deep down there is still that basic feeling that it is better to do something than to be a member of the assembly! But the assembly has an important role! It is called to worship, to exercise its baptismal priesthood of praising God and interceding for the salvation of the world; it is called to continue the work of Christ because it is the presence of Christ in the world. The vision of the Constitution will be implemented when we can truly say and believe that the role of the assembly is the most important thing that we can do, and that those who act as ministers enable the assembly to do just that.

Defining the relationship of the ordained to the assembly in a manner that recognizes the important and unique role that each plays in the liturgy does not undermine the need for ministers or their essential role, but it does place the ordained (and other ministers) within the context of the assembly. The bishop and presbyter must be an icon of Christ; each must act as a leader of the Church, not only to lead the assembly in prayer, but to exercise a ministry of unity, calling them to be the one body of Christ and voicing the one prayer of Christ. The readers and the deacons are the voice of Christ in the assembly, proclaiming the word of God. The ministers of music, ministers of

2 "Christ Jesus, High Priest of the new and eternal covenant, taking human nature . . . joins the entire human community to himself, associating it with his own singing of . . . divine praise. For he continues his priestly work through the agency of his Church, which is unceasingly engaged in praising the Lord and interceding for the salvation of the whole world." (CSL 83)

3 For a fuller treatment of this subject, see Lawrence E. Mick, "First Communion Liturgy" in the 1995 Sourcebook for Sundays and Seasons (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications 1994) xii-xv.
hospitality, servers, and communion assistants facilitate all to engage in the baptismal call to worship God.

In order to affirm the primacy of the assembly, we must engage in a second task: to clarify the purpose of our Sunday assembly and the purpose of our worship. What does liturgy do? Or what should it do? Until it is clear what liturgy does, it is difficult to know what the assembly is called to do. The answers to these questions are not completely clear or unanimously accepted in the hearts of all, even if there is agreement in the textbooks of liturgy. There is no space here to develop the historical forces that are now converging in our time that bring a variety of expectations to the liturgy. Even those forces that shaped the Reformation and the different movements of Protestantism have come to bear upon the Roman Catholic Church. Suffice it to say that both Catholicism and Protestantism are the product of a common history and cultural currents.

At the time of Reformation and Counter Reformation neither denomination operated out of a vision of the assembly as "the action of the whole Church." While Catholics spoke of attending and hearing Mass, Protestants emphasized preaching and the importance of educating the people in the pews about scripture, morality and Christian doctrine. Worship in both traditions still regarded the priest or minister as the primary agent of the worship. Successive renewal movements in both, while doing much good, have still operated out of this basic orientation. Even when a movement did succeed in making the assembly more active in its worship, it did so within its own circles. When it approached the Sunday assembly, it tended to use the Sunday worship to instill its insights and vision into the hearts of others. Despite the high ideals of each movement's message, its methodology was to "convert" or "preach to" others. The assembly was still regarded as the receiver of a message. The movements of the enlightenment, pietism, rationalism, and revivalism have their parallel in Catholicism. These have introduced a variety of goals and aims of what liturgy or worship should be: to accomplish sanctification and inner sentiments of reverence (pietism), intellectual conversion and edification (rationalism), personal conversion and relationship with Jesus (revivalism). No one can argue that these are not part of worship. The question is what is the primary aim of liturgy or worship and what is secondary? The liturgical tradition of Christianity affirms that worship is the glorification of God and the sanctification of the world. All other aims must flow from the primary. To encounter God is by its nature a transforming experience. The assembly is not a body waiting to be acted upon by outside influences or by its ministers. It is God acting through Jesus Christ by the power of the Spirit that transforms the assembly; and since the assembly acts as one with Christ, it is the assembly

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4 General Instruction of the Roman Missal 5
6 See Frank C. Senn, cited above, especially pages 196-203.
7 "The liturgy is the source for achieving in the most effective way possible human sanctification and God's glorification, the end to which all the Church's other activities are directed" (CSL 10). See also no. 83, quoted in note 2.
that opens itself to the power of the divine in recalling the mighty deeds of God. Thus the Sunday assembly in the Christian tradition is God’s people who assemble to proclaim the mighty deeds of God in Christ in order that the assembly may glorify God and intercede for the needs of the Church and the salvation of the world in union with Jesus Christ the high priest who offered his life for our salvation. The assembly is an assembly of faith because it is the assembly of the baptized who have been called by God to be one in Jesus Christ.

The expectations and attitudes of our society exert an influence on the liturgy, for we all live in the world and act in it or react to it. The modern distaste of formalism and pretension, the desire for enthusiasm and authenticity, the effort to engage people, and market orientation and time management are secular influences that affect our approach to liturgy in positive and negative ways. In addition, there are religious pushes and pulls that colour our expectation of what happens or what should happen in worship. The desire for a meaningful, holistic and moving liturgy, the need for intimacy and devotion, the longing for personal contact and emotional content, the need to evangelize and convert, the desire for an upbeat and stimulating “message” are all good things that we want in the liturgy. These can be recognized as the continuation or development of the many positive reform and renewal movements spoken of above. The question that should concern us is how they influence the liturgy: Do they eclipse or emphasize the prime purpose to glorify God and intercede for the salvation of the world? Do they reduce or reinforce the assembly as the main participant in the liturgy? In other words, do they respect the Sunday assembly as a people of faith? My experience tells me that often it is the priest who is expected to bring about these desired effects among his flock. My training in liturgy tells me that it must be the assembly’s encounter with the God of history that brings about the conversion and transformation of the assembly (including the ministers).

The problem is not that liturgy does not bring about transformation or conversion; the problem is that we think it is the primary role of the liturgy or that it is the role of the priest to convert the congregation. Many pastors take up this challenge and therefore exhibit a condescending attitude that the assembly is without faith, and it is their task to convert it. Once again the assembly is placed in a passive and receptive role, and is not the primary subject of its own worship. To respect the assembly as a body of faith is a prime and basic attitude that flows from liturgical renewal. It is true that each person is at a different faith level, but each is present because of faith. The assembly is more than the sum of its members; it is the living sign of the presence of Christ: it is the body of Christ. If the assembly, united to Christ, is the prime celebrant of the liturgy, then the faith of the assembly must be presumed and respected. When the assembly does actively express its faith, then the faith of each member is affirmed, validated and strengthened.

In a society that highly values entertainment and diversion, we must be careful that this attitude does not become another motive for robbing the assembly of its primary role. There is a tendency for presiders and music ministers to fill this expectation, which then obscures the need to make the assembly the subject of its own worship. Under the guise of a progressive and upbeat approach to liturgy, a pre-Vatican II attitude that liturgy is what happens to the assembly is perpetuated.
The market economy that has developed with worship aids and resources, in many cases, continues this pre-Vatican II orientation. Resource materials, ideas and plans for the presider or musician or minister that can make the liturgy more exciting “for your congregation” still carry the attitude that worship is what others do for or to them that will make liturgy good or even better.⁸

Resources that do not respect the assembly as the celebrant of the liturgy tend to suggest constant change, new approaches and gimmicks that rob the assembly of its role. In order for the assembly to be the agent of its own worship – the worship of the Church – it must know the ritual pattern: order of worship, the prayers and songs of the celebration. Constant change to the ritual pattern of worship is damaging to the assembly, as are resources which encourage the ministers to entertain the assembly.

While our hearts might be in the right place, our minds and practices have not been fully converted to the ideal of the liturgy as “the outstanding means whereby the faithful may express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true church.”⁹ The externals of the renewal are firmly in place, but now our hearts and minds need to be renewed. The role of the National Bulletin on Liturgy in liturgical renewal has only begun.

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⁸ There is nothing wrong with ministers wanting to carry out their roles in a better or more professional manner; and the sharing of experiences and wisdom within the church and among ministers is good. However, the underlying principles of how we carry this out needs to be examined very carefully.

⁹ Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy 2.
Life-giving or Life-less?

Patrick Byrne

Patrick Byrne is a presbyter of the Diocese of Peterborough. He served as Editor of the National Bulletin on Liturgy during 1972-1987 (issues 32-111). At present he is an associate pastor of St. Mary's Parish in Lindsay, Ontario.

What gives life to a Sunday liturgy? How can we help our liturgies to be truly the primary and indispensable source of the true Christian spirit? Can a liturgy be done correctly but still be lifeless? Is this what we sometimes – or too often – experience?

One Celebration

One Sunday last summer, while I was on a week of holidays, I visited a parish in a large Canadian city where some of my relatives live. The parish didn’t need any help that weekend, and so I was free to sit in the pews and take full part with the community. The church was modern in design, and enabled all the people to see other’s faces.

To put it bluntly, the service was a disaster: though rubrically correct for the most part, it was not a life-giving celebration, not a good example of the church’s celebration of the Lord’s day.

This article invites us to review what happened, and then to look at some areas where each believing community may work to allow Christ’s Spirit to give us a fuller share of the life of Jesus.

Introductory rites: About 15 minutes before Mass, the organist came out and softly played the hymns to be used during the celebration. Catholic Book of Worship II was in the pews, with enough copies for all.

Shortly before Mass, a well-dressed man in his 20s took his place near the organ. He announced the name of the Sunday and the number of the opening hymn. All stood and began to sing.

The entrance procession came from the front porch through the community. There was an adequate number of ministers for this celebration, and all were singing. They reverenced the altar, and took their places.

The presiding priest went to the chair and began with the sign of the cross and the liturgical greeting. After all said the “I confess” and “Glory to God” together, the priest read the opening prayer at lightning speed, and all answered “Amen.” Then all sat for the readings.

Liturgy of the word of God: The first two readings were read by separate readers. The song leader sang the psalm, and all responded. He led the

singing of the gospel acclamation. A visiting missionary, wearing a white cas­
sock with purple buttons (he was a monsignor!) and a green stole, read the
gospel and gave a talk requesting money for the work of his diocese in a mis­sion country. During this talk, the presider sat cross-legged at the chair.

The creed and the prayer of the faithful completed this section of the Mass. Then the collection was taken.

**Liturgy of the eucharist:** The gifts were brought forward by members of the
congregation. The preface dialogue and the "Holy, holy, holy Lord" were sung. The eucharistic prayer – like the other presidential texts – was proclaimed
without any regard to punctuation or sense lines: it was just one unending
stream of words. The great "Amen" was sung by all.

During the singing of the "Lamb of God," lay ministers brought ciboria from the
tabernacle. Communion was given to all under the form of bread alone. The
procession was respectful, and a hymn was sung. The liturgy of the eucharist
concluded with the prayer after communion, again said without any pauses for
breath or meaning.

**Concluding rite:** As the Mass ended, the ministers formed the procession
and moved through the community as we sang the final hymn. At the doors,
ushers handed out envelopes for the missionary's fund, and he and the
presider greeted people as they left.

**Analysis**

**General comments:** Technically speaking, a few rubrics and guidelines were
ignored or violated, but in general the priests, ministers, and people did what
they were supposed to do. Yet this Lord's day liturgy seemed to lack life, and
did not challenge the community to go out and bring the life and saving grace of
Jesus Christ into their community during this week in the service of the Lord.

Except for the organist, song leader, and missionary, the other ministers and
people seemed to lack enthusiasm. They were just there, doing their job. The
"Holy, holy, holy Lord" was just another song to sing in that place, and there were
no echoes of Isaiah's angels or Jerusalem's cheering throngs, no sense of
singing this song with the church on earth and the angels and saints in heaven.²

Little if any impact would seem to be made in the lives of those who took part
in the 9:00 o'clock Mass that Sunday morning. This Mass seemed like a rou­
tine practice, a dress rehearsal, rather than the real thing. If God were going to
touch our lives, it wouldn't be expected to take place in this Sunday's liturgy.

There was no Sunday bulletin to bring any teaching or information and chal­
 lenges into the lives of the people during the week. Was the bulletin closed
down for the summer because many people were out of town on vacation?
Does this say something about the spirit of the parish and its leadership?

**A loss of vision?** Would it be fair to say that this community seems to have
lost its vision? There seemed to be little sense of being the church of Christ in

² See Isaiah 6.1-4; Mark 11.9-10. It is interesting to see how this worship of heaven and earth is
described in the final paragraph of each of the prefaces.
this place, gathered by the Father to listen, to pray, to praise, to thank, to be nourished, and to be sent forth: People did their jobs in the liturgy, but seemed unaware of Jesus as the primary celebrant. At least the presence and the appeal by the missionary contributed some sense of their belonging to the worldwide church.

**What about our own liturgies?** None of us should be ready to cast the first stone. Every parish experiences some of these failures or shortcomings, some more than others. What can your parish or community do in order to move to better celebrations of the church’s worship each Sunday of the year?

**Formation Is Needed**

The Second Vatican Council sought to renew the church by first of all renewing the liturgy, by allowing its life-giving benefits to penetrate the life of the church and touch the lives of all its members. In order to achieve this, the Council told us that all Catholics had to understand the following basic principles of our church and our worship.

**Jesus Christ is our high priest:** Liturgy is first of all the work of Jesus, our high priest. Read the Constitution, no. 7.

**We are God’s priestly people:** In baptism we are called by Jesus to share in his priesthood, to work with him in giving praise to God and in saving the world. Each of us receives this right, privilege and duty when we are baptized. Read the Constitution, no. 14.

**We are called to full, active, and understanding participation:** Since we share in Jesus’ priestly work, we are invited to enter into it fully. Our Lord wants us to understand what we are doing with him and with all his people in heaven and on earth. We are not called to be passive onlookers, but active sharers in the work and worship of Jesus and his church. Read the Constitution, no. 14.

**Primary and indispensable source:** Full, active participation in the church’s liturgy each Lord’s day – and on other occasions – is the first and main source of our sharing in the Spirit of Jesus and of entering into his paschal mystery. No other way of spirituality, no matter how famous, can replace the Lord’s own way. Read the Constitution, no. 14.

**Renewing our baptismal promises in each eucharist:** Each time we celebrate the eucharist, and particularly on the Lord’s day, we are invited to renew the promises of our baptism. We do this solemnly at confirmation and during the Easter vigil. We are also asked to renew these basic promises of our Christian life in every Mass. (This is a point of eucharistic spirituality that is unknown to many.) Read the Constitution, no. 10.

**People need to be prepared for celebrating liturgy:** The members of the community need help to prepare themselves to take part fully in the church’s worship. This preparation involves prayer; reflecting on the next Sunday’s readings; living a good life during the week; offering up their prayers, works, and sufferings to the Lord as part of their gift for the following Sunday; and uniting their hearts with Jesus in his love for God and neighbour. Liturgical formation of the laity – helping them to join their lives with their liturgy – is an
important part of the work of their clergy and other spiritual leaders and ministers. Read the Constitution, nos. 11 and 19.

**Pastors too need help and formation:** Pastors and other spiritual leaders need to be formed in the spirit of the liturgy, in order that they may pass on to their people the riches of Christian worship and help them to share more fully in the graces offered by our Lord. Clergy need to go beyond the correct execution of the rites, and enter fully into their spirit as the work of our saving Lord. Read the Constitution, nos. 11 and 14.

**Areas Needing Renewal**

One desire of the Second Vatican Council was to enable people to understand what they were doing in the liturgy. In the Constitution on the Liturgy, ways of achieving this included simplification of the rites, use of the people’s language, and liturgical formation of people and their ministers.

Some specific areas of renewal within the liturgy were proposed at Vatican II in order to help communities to take part more fully and fruitfully in the worship of the church.

**A general reform of the rites of the Mass:** This renewal was carried out in the years after the Council, and came into effect in the revised texts and ceremonies of the sacramentary and the lectionary. See the Constitution, no. 50.

Each celebrating community needs to ask itself some questions: Are we using the current books as required and desired by the church? Are we following them faithfully, or have extraneous elements wandered into our liturgies through the excessive or mistaken piety of some? Are we celebrating with the church, or doing our own thing? Deviations from the church’s ways of worship are not healthy, and lead us away from the paths of Jesus, our high priest. Remember the words of the prophet about those who turn away from the fountain of living water, and build faulty cisterns that cannot hold water. ³

**A richer diet of God’s word:** With the reform of the lectionary, the church moved from a one-year Sunday lectionary to a three-year system, and from two readings to three each Sunday. Over the course of three years, the main readings from God’s word are proclaimed to the people of God in each community. As well, a complete lectionary for weekdays, for the feasts of saints, for ritual Masses, and for a variety of other occasions is now provided. See the Constitution, nos. 51 and 35.1.

Our communities have to ask themselves: Are we benefitting from the riches offered to us in the readings? Are we helping our readers, preachers, musicians, and the rest of our people to prepare for Sundays by reflecting on the texts for the following week? Are the readers proclaiming the texts clearly, so that all can hear and understand? Are there ways in which we can help readers prepare better to do their important task in the life of the community?

The Second Vatican Council recommended that bible services – celebrations of the word of God – should be part of the worship life of our communities. These

³ See Jeremiah 2.13.
celebrations are encouraged the evening before greater feasts, on some week­
days of Lent and Advent, and on Sundays and feasts. They were also recom­
mended for communities without a priest. See the Constitution, no. 35.4.

**Return of the homily:** The Council emphasized that liturgical preaching is to
proclaim God’s wonderful works which lead to our salvation, especially the
mystery of Jesus Christ, who is always present and acting in us during the
church’s liturgy. The main sources of our preaching are to be Scripture and the
liturgy, including texts, rites and seasons. In the homily, the mysteries of our
faith and the principles that guide our Christian living are proclaimed from the
scripture readings. The homily is always to be given on the Lord’s day. See the
Constitution, nos. 52 and 35.2.

In the years since the Council, the revised celebrations for the sacraments and
other rites normally contain a place for a homily or brief instruction; as a rule,
this is after the Scriptures have been proclaimed to the assembled people.

Those who preach need an occasional opportunity to take a course, work­
shop, or day of reflection on this ministry and its proper exercise. How long is it
since the clergy in your parish, community, or deanery have had the chance for
this type of renewal? What can be done to promote better preaching in
your parish or community?

Each week in the parish bulletin, people can be invited to prepare for next
Sunday’s Mass by reflecting on the readings and praying about them. In this way,
they will be more open to hearing God’s word in the readings and in the homily.

**Prayer of the faithful:** The Council restored this prayer of petition to the
Sunday Mass. As God’s chosen people of prayer, the local community prays
for the church and for the world. See the Constitution, no. 53.

Some thirty years later, we might ask ourselves how well we celebrate this
prayer. Do we maintain a balance between the needs of the church and the
needs of the world, between universal and local concerns? Do we invite com­
munity members to suggest names of the sick and other important intentions
to pray for? Is the prayer composed locally or merely taken from a book of
generic intentions? Do we ever look at the models given in the sacramentary,
and compare our forms of prayer with them? Is any effort made to relate one
or more of the petitions to the readings of the day or to the season or feast?
How can we continue to do better in our community?

**Moving from Latin to English:** The Council suggested the value of using peo­
ple’s own language instead of Latin alone in the liturgy. See the Constitution,
nos. 36 and 54. People were encouraged to know some parts in Latin.

Once the people and the clergy experienced parts of the liturgy in their own
language, there was no turning back. Within a few years, all parts of Catholic
worship were in the language of the people. This was true in many countries,
and not just in English-speaking communities. The benefits of liturgical prayer

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4 See *Sacramentary* (Ottawa: CCC, 1974; CCCB, 1983): sample formulas for the general inter­
cessions, nn 578-588, pages 1040-1052; *The Sacramentary* (New York and Cleveland: Collins
in English are manifold, and few people want to pray in a language they do not speak or understand.

A new concern has become apparent, however, in the complete use of English in the liturgy. Since ours is a living language, words change in their meaning, and a more frequent review of texts is needed. As new scripture translations appear, their suitability for use in public worship needs to be studied carefully and without haste.

One of the benefits of our use of English in the liturgy has been the development of common prayer texts which are being used by most of the major churches wherever English is spoken. These texts have been prepared by international ecumenical groups which consult the major churches in English-speaking countries around the world.

Communion from the elements consecrated in this Mass: The Council strongly recommended that the elements of bread and wine which will be used for communion are to be consecrated in the Mass in which they are distributed. In this way, people are receiving communion from the gifts which they have offered. See the Constitution, no. 55. This seemed to be in response to the practice, prevalent at that time, of keeping the tabernacle full of consecrated hosts, and of giving communion from these. Now the church recommends that as far as possible, we try to consecrate communion for the people in each Mass.

What is the practice in your parish or community? Are you making an effort to be in tune with the Council’s recommendation?

Communion from the cup: Jesus gave us the eucharist at the last supper under the signs of bread and wine, of eating and drinking. For various reasons, the Western Catholic church over the centuries had drifted away from the full sign of communion under both forms for the laity. At the time of the Reformation in the 1500s, the new churches consciously restored communion from the cup for all communicants. The Second Vatican Council has begun to call us back gradually to communion as Christ gave it to us. See the Constitution, no. 55.

The liturgy invites all to receive communion from the cup on Holy Thursday and at the Easter vigil. As people are ready, this practice could be extended to the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Jesus, and gradually to all the Masses celebrated in the community on Sundays and on weekdays.

In 1970, the bishops of Canada responded to Rome’s invitation to list the occasions on which communion may be given from the cup. Their final point in


6 The English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC) was established in 1983, and has its secretariat in Washington, D.C. Its texts are published in Praying Together (Nashville: Abingdon, 1988). It is the successor to the International Consultation on English Texts (ICET), which ceased to exist after publishing its last edition of Prayers We Have In Common (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975).

7 See Matthew 26.26-28; Mark 14.22-24; Luke 22.17-20; 1 Corinthians 11.23-26 (see also 11.27-29; 10.16-17); and John 6.53-58.
this list included all other occasions approved by the bishop. Rome accepted this. In putting this into practice, however, our bishops reminded us that adequate catechesis is necessary. As well, people and communion ministers needed to be given guidance to promote orderly and reverent reception of communion from the cup.

Our bishops encourage us to drink from the cup, as Jesus commands us. Intinction ("dunking," as some might call it) is strongly discouraged, because this minimizes the sign of drinking. Since the sacrament is to be received from a minister, the community is not permitted to dip the host into the chalice.

Ecumenical dimensions: In January 1982, more than 100 theologians, including Roman Catholics, met in Lima, Peru, to complete a 50-year study on where the churches stand on baptism, eucharist, and ministry. On eucharist, the document refers to 21 elements which have been common in Christian celebrations of the eucharist through history. Among these are preparation of the bread and wine, and eating and drinking in communion with Christ and with each member of the church.⁸

As the churches come closer in their eucharistic practice and therefore in understanding and faith, some are going to question seriously the continuing failure of many Catholic communities to provide communion from the cup at each Mass for all who wish to receive under the full sign, as given to us by Jesus. Do we need to apply Jesus' words in Mark 7.8 to our communion practices?

Where is your community in regard to the use of the cup? Are you moving gradually in the direction in which Jesus and the Council are calling us?

Morning and evening prayer: The Second Vatican Council described what we now call the liturgy of the hours as the prayer of Jesus Christ our high priest and of his church. While most of the reforms concerned the public prayer of religious communities and the clergy, the Council did ask pastors to encourage the public celebration of morning prayer and especially evening prayer on Sundays and greater feasts. Lay people were invited to pray the hours with their priests, with other lay people, or even alone. See the Constitution, nos. 83-85, 100.

This appeal to celebrate morning and evening prayer — the main hours in each day's prayer — in parishes is perhaps the least heeded of all the reforms of Vatican II. Do any parishes in your diocese celebrate morning or evening prayer, at least occasionally during the year?

Morning or evening prayer may be celebrated once or twice a week during Lent and Advent, or on the evening of a major feast, such as the parish patron or titular saint of the parish. A parish may celebrate morning prayer each Saturday, before or after morning Mass.⁹ A eucharistic holy hour may be celebrated within the framework of morning or evening prayer.¹⁰

⁹ In St. Mary's parish in Lindsay, we have celebrated morning prayer before Mass every Saturday since the spring of 1991. We celebrate four eucharistic devotion Sundays during the year, with an opening Mass at 10:30 a.m., exposition and procession; personal prayer and adoration until 3:00 p.m., when a holy hour is celebrated, closing with Benediction. The holy hour follows the outline of evening prayer, with extended silence, reflection, prayers, and singing.
¹⁰ Guidelines for Pastoral Liturgy: Liturgical Calendar 1995-1996 (Ottawa: CCCB, 1995): see Pastoral Notes 19 (e-g), and 32.
A pastoral form of the hours has been included in *Catholic Book of Worship*:

- **CBW II:** Evening prayer, nos. 62-71; Morning prayer, nos. 72-79
- **CBW III:** Morning prayer, no 13 A-I; Evening prayer, No. 14 A-M.

These formats provide guidance for the celebration of these hours, and suggest appropriate hymns and psalms (see the liturgical index in the choir edition). As a community grows in its celebration of morning and evening prayer, other psalms and hymns may be used.

Parish groups and organizations may be encouraged to use at least a hymn, psalm, gospel canticle, and prayer from the appropriate hour when they meet. This would enable them to be in tune with the church’s morning or evening prayer.

**Steps Toward Better Liturgy**

More than thirty years ago, in the Constitution on the Liturgy, the Second Vatican Council spoke about the principles which are the foundation of good liturgy. When these are recognized and accepted in a community, its liturgy will be more life-giving because the people are more open to the work of Christ with them and among them.

The following suggestions may take two or three years to achieve full results, but they offer each community good ways to move gradually toward life-giving liturgies on the Lord’s day.

**Start at the diocesan level:** In many dioceses, it has been years since liturgical formation of the clergy has been a concern. Those who are the leaders of worship in local communities need to review the principles of good liturgy, the church’s understanding of renewal and adaptation, and the resources available, and to have their spiritual batteries recharged. Only in this way can they go back and share this clearer understanding and enthusiasm with their people. Canada has a good number of responsible, trained liturgists. Why not ask your diocesan liturgical commission, pastoral council, clergy council, or bishop to invite one or two liturgists into your diocese for one or more workshops in the next year or so?

These workshops can be directed to clergy, choir directors, those in charge of other liturgical ministries (such as readers, communion ministers, and ushers), youth leaders and some catechists. Some dioceses may wish to have one for their clergy and another for leading ministers from each parish. The number of initial workshops will depend on the numbers and the geography of each diocese.

To be effective, the diocesan workshops(s) will have to offer practical guidelines and suggestions for holding workshops at the parish level, as described below.

**Continue at the level of the parish:** Those who have taken part in the diocesan workshop need to share what they have learned. In each parish there are groups who can benefit from their knowledge and enthusiasm, including musicians and singers, readers, communion ministers, ushers, catechists, and youth leaders. Perhaps two members from the executive of each parish organization and society could be included in this group.
Purposes of the workshops: The first aim of these workshops is to help lay ministers and parish leaders grow in their understanding of the teaching of Vatican II on the church and on its liturgy. The second aim is to prepare these people to work together to lead all the parish members into a richer experience and understanding of good liturgy in their parish life.

The formation of these ministers and leaders may take place on two or three evenings spread over a month, or on a Saturday. Too much time between sessions may result in a weakening of the enthusiasm and results from these workshops.

Content of the workshops: The workshop should help those taking part to understand Catholic teaching on Jesus, the church, and the liturgy. Concrete examples of good liturgy and sound practices will enable all to combine both theory and practice. The potential of good celebrations of liturgy as the primary and indispensable source of the true Christian spirit of this parish community needs to be emphasized. A balanced grasp of the roles of all in preparing and celebrating liturgy will open the way for better work by all liturgical ministries in the liturgy.

A variety of methods: In helping the community members to grow in their understanding of their faith, the teaching can be passed on in many ways: through articles and handouts in the Sunday bulletin, homilies, discussion groups, workshops, good liturgical celebrations, videos on the Mass, baptism, other sacraments, and the church.

Religious communities: Larger convents and mother houses may have their own trained liturgist working with them. Perhaps some representatives of the religious will take part in the diocesan workshop, and then bring back their information and share it with the rest. Those in smaller houses may come to a central meeting for a workshop with religious from other communities. Some may find it better to take part in the workshops in the parishes where they live or work.

All might look at the way they celebrate morning and evening prayer as the chief hours of the liturgical day. Are they drifting away from the ideal? Are they “taking the weekends off” instead of praying the church’s prayer, especially on the Lord’s day? Is it time for a day of reflection centered on the meaning of daily liturgical prayer and its connection with daily work, the Mass, and their sharing in the priesthood of Jesus?

Schools: Many Catholic high schools have chaplains. These could be involved in the diocesan or local workshops, and bring the teaching back to their own specialized community. They may wish to review their current liturgical practices with the diocesan liturgy commission or with others who can help them evaluate what they are doing.

Liturgies in parish schools ought to be one of the areas examined at the parish level.

Other communities, such as hospitals and prisons, should become involved at the diocesan or regional level, if this is suitable. As a rule, their special needs are too specific to be handled in conjunction with a parish workshop.

Conclusion: Strong participation by all in well-celebrated liturgies is the primary and indispensable source of the true Christian spirit. These are the liturgies that are life-giving.

Each of us should work hard to make the liturgy truly effective in our own community by helping all to prepare and celebrate well, in accord with the mind of Jesus and his bride, the Church.
A Reflection on Liturgical Conversations

Bernadette Gasslein

Bernadette Gasslein is liturgical editor for Novalis—Saint Paul University in Ottawa, and editor of Celebrate! She has been active in liturgy and catechetics at the local, provincial and national levels for the past twenty-seven years.

Any publication’s thirtieth anniversary is an event to celebrate, and that is certainly the case of the National Bulletin on Liturgy’s thirtieth. This anniversary marks not just the Bulletin’s history, but also one aspect of the Canadian Church’s commitment to liturgical renewal: “the Bulletin,” as it is fondly known, was founded to promote and help implement liturgical renewal in Canada.

We can be proud of our history of liturgical renewal: the Canadian Church is recognized in the English-speaking world for the quality of its liturgical publications that, when properly used, promote full and rich celebrations. Now that we have published all our liturgical books once, and we have had thirty-some years to embrace the ritual patterns they offer us, we can begin the work of liturgical renewal in depth. Like figure skaters or dancers, we have just learned the steps — for, in ritual terms, 30 years are but a day. Now we must master these patterns, so that we can celebrate fully, consciously and actively, and let them take us into the mystery of the living God.

Just before I was about to embark on a summer that saw me teaching three different liturgy courses in three different Ontario cities, I received the invitation to contribute to this special anniversary edition of the Bulletin. Conversations with students in these various courses suggest some key areas that need attention so we can celebrate fully. I invite you to listen in on several of these conversations that I have reconstructed here, and to reflect on the challenges and possibilities they open up for continuing liturgical renewal.

Just an Ideal?

Although some people have read the liturgy documents that came out of Vatican II and the post-conciliar reform many times, others find their content is news — good news, at that. I often give my students the following handout, which describes what liturgy is, according to the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (CSL) and the General Instruction on the Roman Missal (GIRM):

- the outstanding means whereby the faithful may express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church (CSL 2)
- an exercise of the priestly office of Christ (CSL 7)
• a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem (CSL 1.0)
• a sacred action surpassing all others; no other action of the Church can equal its effectiveness by the same title and to the same degree (CSL 7)
• the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fount from which all the Church's power flows (CSL 10)
• the source for achieving in the most effective way possible human sanctification and God's glorification, the end to which all the Church's other activities are directed (CSL 10)
• the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit (CSL 14)
• the high point of the work that in Christ, his Son, we offer to the Father (GIRM 1)
• the action of the whole Church (GIRM 5)

A similar handout, drawn from the same sources, describes what liturgy does:
• daily builds up those who are within into a holy temple of the Lord, into a dwelling place for God in the Spirit
• strengthens their power to preach Christ
• shows forth the Church to those who are outside as a sign lifted up among the nations (CSL 2)
• moves the faithful to be one in holiness
• prays that they may hold fast in their lives to what they have grasped by faith
• draws the faithful into the compelling love of Christ and sets them on fire (CSL 10)
• Christ continues his priestly work through the agency of his Church, which is unceasingly engaged in praising the Lord and interceding for the salvation of the whole (CSL 83)

These handouts elicit a variety of responses. First, people are impressed. Assembled together, these passages witness powerfully to the status and role of liturgy in our life. We note the use of superlatives: the outstanding means, surpassing all others, no other action can equal its effectiveness; the summit; in the most effective way possible; the end to which all the other activities are directed; primary and indispensable source; high point of the work. Clearly this is activity unlike any other in the community's life.

Then we look at the verbs: builds up, strengthens, shows forth, moves, prays, draws, continues. Clearly, the liturgy is meant to be effective in the life of the Church – in our lives – and the world.

Quickly on the heels of our discussion, however, a question usually follows: "But Bernadette, this really is just an ideal, isn't it? I mean, they don't really expect this to happen, do they?" We re-examine the language: no hint here of the language of ideals. We are not striving for something, or reaching towards it; this does not describe what liturgy should be; it details what liturgy is.

This juncture represents a difficult moment in our discussions, for participants must here, either aloud or in their private reflection, confront the difference between the stated reality and their lived experience. There is a real per-
ception that we don't "walk this talk." After all, if liturgy is really that important, they muse, wouldn't its centrality be reflected in the time we allot to its preparation? in the resources — financial, artistic and human — that we put at its service?

The sense of this gap often increases when we examine the goal of liturgy:

- In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy, the full and active participation of all the people is the aim to be considered before all else, for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to desire the true Christian spirit. (CSL 14)

- Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of liturgy [emphasis mine], and to which the Christian people, 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people' (1 Peter 2.4-5) have a right and obligation by reason of their baptism. (CSL 14)

Realizing that this takes participants in their discussion far beyond the obligation to attendance on Sunday, some ask in response: How are we to fulfill this obligation when so few resources are placed at its service? Their presence at these courses is a partial response to their question, for these folks most often are already in leadership positions within their communities, trying their level best to promote liturgical renewal.

Honouring the Nature of Liturgy: Theological and Ritual

Examining this goal of full, conscious and active participation leads us to ponder the nature of liturgy. Its theological nature — trinitarian, christological, ecclesiological, eschatological, euchological, incarnational — is revealed by its ritual nature — repeated patterns, forms, structures of action, music, symbol, gesture and words: metaphor, poetry, story. Taken separately, the theological nature and the ritual nature of liturgy do not seem to pose a great problem to participants. Each of the concepts can be mastered with some thought, study and reflection. But then there is my tiny connecting phrase: "is revealed by."

To examine how the ritual nature of liturgy reveals its theological nature, we move through the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) to glean from it some examples of how this relationship works.

GIRM, chapter 1, no. 3, speaks of a participation "in body and spirit." We discuss how the assembly participates in liturgy. On the left are listed the ordinary actions; on the right, the related ritual actions.

- come in assembly
- sit for a ritual, not for watching TV
- stand together, ready to participate
- sing not a solo, but as a group: the body of Christ
- speak at specific times for the ritual's purpose, and together; to ask forgiveness, to praise, petition, acclaim, proclaim
- respond with established words

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• listen
• see
• pray
• smell
• taste
• eat
• drink
• imagine
• walk
• move
• read
• serve
• carry
• shake hands
• break bread
• welcome
• set the table
• be silent
• thank

• listen to the word
• observe
• in silence, aloud; prayer with/for
• incense; candles
• taste a wafer
• eat a ritual meal
• share the cup of the Lord's very self
• focus our imaginations as we experience the kingdom in this action
• process
• move ritually
• proclaim
• serve bread, a cup
• carry a book or gifts in procession
• offer peace
• commune at the Lord’s table
• welcome to the Lord’s house
• set the table of the Lord
• pray in silence at the appropriate moment
• offer thanksgiving

In the ensuing discussion, we discover our impoverished consciousness of how much action the assembly does undertake and our lack of intentionality around these actions. We discuss at length how we can enhance them. My students punctuate the discussion with a refrain: "Father won’t let us." Some examples follow. The GIRM says, "The purpose of [the entrance song] is to open the celebration, intensify the unity of the gathered people, lead their thoughts to the mystery of the season or feast and accompany the procession of the priest and ministers." My students counter: "Father will only let us sing two verses of an entrance hymn. He says that once he gets to the altar, we should be quiet."

We discuss nos. 20 and 21, which deal with the various postures, especially the standing posture, during the celebration and their meaning, as well as processions. (We are amazed to discover that the Triduum boasts 16 processions!) But they chide me, "We can't do that. We're told they take too long." Or they indicate that they are not permitted to sing during the communion procession, lest they disturb individual private prayer – even though the GIRM (no. 56h) clearly sets forth why this song is so essential to the ritual action. We discuss the ecclesial nature of communion, and wonder how we can help people grasp this if we do not invite them to discover it through the song that "expresses outwardly the communicants' union in spirit by means of the unity of their voices." We recognize mystery: we are in Christ, we are caught up by this action in the life of the Trinity, we are feasting at the banquet of the kingdom.

We discuss eating and drinking. We discuss the challenges to eating presented by hosts which so minimally resemble real bread, and our indifference to the command of Christ to "take and drink" as we withhold the cup from the people. We discuss the relationship between the sensate action of tasting and
the conclusion that sees that the Lord is good, and how the latter conclusion depends on the physical response of the senses, and not on an intellectual construct. Many participants wish we could have communion under both kinds. Encouraged by GIRM no. 283, many long for bread that enables them to taste and see the Lord's goodness. Too often their desire is refused: "It's not allowed." "The people aren't ready — and besides, who would bake the bread?" "There's not enough time." "It's too messy." They regret that no further preparation for such full participation is encouraged.

We reflect on the mystery of the incarnation that is at the root of our Catholic notion of sacramentality. We recognize that this mystery still presents for us almost unbearable challenges: to recognize that God speaks to us through creation itself, with all its limits — the broken bread, the shared cup, the broken body of Christ, sacramental and ecclesial.

Who Celebrates?

We ponder the great prayer of thanksgiving as the prayer of the whole assembly (GIRM no. 54). I encourage participants, when preparing eucharistic liturgy, to begin with the eucharistic prayer — including the prefaces: to savour the words and images that reveal what we are doing at this, "the centre and summit of the entire celebration." They are surprised; convinced over the years by words and behaviours that this prayer belongs to presbyters alone, they hesitate to tread on what seems to be the privileged territory of another.

We read the eucharistic prayers, with their relentless "we." We read the liturgical documents. Their heads say, "The assembly is the celebrant of the liturgy." Their imaginations still balk a bit; after all, some have been told over and over, "It's my mass." "I'll come and say mass for you." And yet, the more we read, discuss and ponder, the clearer it becomes: the assembly is the celebrant of the liturgy. Imaginations can change — and as they do, change ensues on many other levels.

We explore the issue further, this time using the collect prayers with their pattern of invitation by the presider, silent prayer by the assembly, prayer voiced by the presider and assent by the assembly. We note the frequent absence of that silence and discuss its impact on the assembly's prayer and dignity. We discuss what this means in terms of christology and ecclesiology. We remember that it is Christ who celebrates — not the priest. We, Christ's body, celebrate this liturgy through him, with him and in him. Eliminating the assembly's role pushes aside the action of the whole body of Christ.

We note how Austin Fleming, in his landmark book Preparing for Liturgy: A Theology and Spirituality, describes all these situations: "communities and ministers who celebrate according to the revised rites but in a minimalist fashion." We hear of the pastors who declare, "I don't want any of those 'frills' (rich symbols, full participation)." Then we reread a passage from the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: "Pastors must . . . realize that when the liturgy is celebrated, something more is required than the mere observance of the laws governing valid and lawful celebration."

In our discussions, we try to exercise compassion towards people schooled in a different understanding of liturgy, where validity and liceity were paramount. But many of these participants are growing impatient with clergy younger than they (who range between 30 and 60) who seem so indifferent to the assembly's right and obligation to full, conscious and active participation, and so unable to promote this. They question in their journals: "Look at how the Church describes liturgy. If liturgy is so important, why do our pastors have so little formation in it?"

The Indispensable Source of the True Christian Spirit

We talk about why good liturgy is important to us: why these participants would take vacation time, in the heat of summer, to study liturgy, to pray together, morning and evening. In unique ways, each person indicates how essential liturgy is to his or her own spirituality, not as private devotional prayer, but as "the indispensable source from which they . . . derive the true Christian spirit." They want to share that good news with others. Rooted by the liturgy in a sense of Church, they recognize and respond to the thirst for such a source of living water. They recognize, for instance, that contrary to what some people think, contemporary women and men are searching for ritual patterns out of which they can live. These leaders-in-formation see this thirst lived out in such current phenomena as New Age, where candles, incense, bells and music figure prominently.

They know the true Christian spirit: the paschal pattern of our living and dying. They recognize that it is

- a spirit of thanksgiving: life is redeemed. No matter the darkness, the brokenness, there is reason to give thanks, for God is at home in all creation. Profound gratitude, not euphoria, characterizes their existence, and sustains them in the face of adversity.
- a spirit of love: the self-giving love that we remember in eucharist becomes the pattern of their lives. "If, therefore, you are the body of Christ and its members, your mystery has been placed on the Lord's table, you receive your mystery" (Augustine). They know that every meal is a sacrifice, every eucharist is a sacrifice; they know that in Christ there is no love without handing themselves over to be broken and eaten as nourishment.
- a spirit of joy: in the midst of darkness, light breaks through; where there is death, life triumphs; the Almighty has done great things for us, we are full of joy. Recognizing the paschal pattern to all life maintains us in hope.

All of us have heard the many voices within the Church today that lament the quality of faith, the lack of interest, the absence of "the true Christian spirit." We note, in contrast, that few voices lament the poor quality of so much parish liturgy, and we wonder why the connection is so rarely made between these two realities. After all, it is not the rite that is at fault, but the way that it is celebrated. Some of those who pine for the sense of mystery of the pre-conciliar liturgy simply may never have experienced the post-conciliar liturgy celebrated well.

At the same time, we note that where liturgy is taken seriously and celebrated well, vitality marks the community. Access to the source of the true Christian spirit enables these communities to discover that they are the people of God,
the body of Christ, and to act out of this ecclesial dignity. Sacramentality reveals the mystery of the incarnation at work in their midst. Compassionate service to others and passion for justice flow from such experiences. The well does not run dry.

Seeds of a Future
What can we draw from the conversations? Certainly they name some painful realities. But they also are hopeful. What future’s seeds do they contain? I would like to propose four possibilities.

• The sense of ourselves as the assembly who celebrates is starting to settle in. People are shifting away from an exclusive focus on the particular ministries that, rightfully, occupied so much of our energy in the last thirty years, and are just beginning to see the bigger picture: we celebrate. This is not to say they haven’t heard or read this before. It is finally starting to seep into their imaginations, where subtle transformations are happening. As the transformation continues, it will engender other shifts within the community’s self-perception and action.

• The thirst for liturgical renewal has not been slaked. As the assembly becomes more conscious of its ministry, a whole new area for renewal is opening up. Unlike particular ministries that were served by specific formation programs, the assembly’s ministry will be best served by well-prepared and well-executed celebrations. The needs of this preparation will define the formation of the future.

• Leadership in the desire for and formation in liturgical renewal has, for the most part, shifted from clergy to the laity. The vast majority of participants in all of these courses were lay. Although the distinction may seem facile, it seems that lay people seek formation in and for liturgical ministry out of a real spiritual hunger, whereas the ordained seek it in order to carry out a function. As their numbers decrease, this functionalism poses an increased danger. When one presbyter is named pastor to several communities, he runs the risk of simply becoming the dispenser of sacraments, rather than the one who presides at the community’s life, expressed most fully at its gathering around the Lord’s table. On the positive side, this same situation demands that the community develop leaders who can help it discover itself as celebrant so that it can continue to gather in the spirit of the Sunday, even in the absence of a priest.

• There is a real need to re-visit the basics. Thirty years ago, we did so to find out how to do things, and often shortchanged the “why” aspect. Now we need to look at the why and the how together, at the theology embedded in and performed by our rites. If we commit ourselves to this process, and to the quality of celebration it can produce, people will no longer wonder if the liturgy as a foretaste of the heavenly liturgy is an ideal; they will come to know it in their own communities. And we will have one more reason to give thanks.
The Roman Liturgy and Inculturation

Fourth Instruction for the Right Application of the Conciliar Constitution on the Liturgy

Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments

This document is being reprinted here to make it readily available throughout the English sector of the Church in Canada. This English version was first published in Origins, vol. 23, no. 43, April 14, 1994.

The subject of liturgy and culture has been the main subject of three previous issues of the Bulletin:

• Culture and Liturgy, vol. 17, no. 95, September-October 1984
• Culture and Liturgy: II, vol. 19, no. 105, September-October 1986
• Liturgy and the Cultural Mosaic, vol. 26, no. 133, Summer 1993.

1. Legitimate differences in the Roman rite were allowed in the past and were foreseen by the Second Vatican Council in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy Sacrosanctum Concilium, especially in the missions.¹ “Even in the liturgy the Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters that do not affect the faith or the good of the whole community.”² It has known and still knows many different forms and liturgical families, and considers that this diversity, far from harming her unity, underlines its value.³

2. In his apostolic letter Vicesimus Quintus Annuus, the Holy Father Pope John Paul II described the attempt to make the liturgy take root in different cultures as an important task for liturgical renewal.⁴ This work was foreseen in earlier instructions and in liturgical books, and it must be followed up in the light of experience, welcoming where necessary cultural values “which are compatible with the true and authentic spirit of the liturgy, always respecting the substantial unity of the Roman rite as expressed in the liturgical books.”⁵

¹ Cf. No. 38; cf. also No. 40.
² Ibid., 37.
³ Cf. Vatican Council II, Orientalium Ecclesiarum, 2; Sacrosanctum Concilium, 3 and 4; Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1200-1206, especially 1204-1206.
⁵ Ibid.
3. By order of the supreme pontiff, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments has prepared this instruction: The norms for the adaptation of the liturgy to the temperament and conditions of different peoples, which were given in Articles 37-40 of the constitution Sacrosanctum Concilium, are here defined; certain principles expressed in general terms in those articles are explained more precisely, the directives are set out in a more appropriate way and the order to be followed is clearly set out, so that in future this will be considered the only correct procedure. Since the theological principles relating to questions of faith and inculturation have still to be examined in depth, this congregation wishes to help bishops and episcopal conferences to consider or put into effect, according to the law, such adaptations as are already foreseen in the liturgical books; to re-examine critically arrangements that have already been made; and if in certain cultures pastoral need requires that form of adaptation of the liturgy which the constitution calls "more profound" and at the same time considers "more difficult," to make arrangements for putting it into effect in accordance with the law.

Preliminary Observations

4. The constitution Sacrosanctum Concilium spoke of the different forms of liturgical adaptation. Subsequently the magisterium of the Church has used the term inculturation to define more precisely "the incarnation of the Gospel in autonomous cultures and at the same time the introduction of these cultures into the life of the Church." Inculturation signifies "an intimate transformation of the authentic cultural values by their integration into Christianity and the implantation of Christianity into different human cultures." The change of vocabulary is understandable, even in the liturgical sphere. The expression adaptation, taken from missionary terminology, could lead one to think of modifications of a somewhat transitory and external nature. The term inculturation is a better expression to designate a double movement: "By inculturation, the Church makes the Gospel incarnate in different cultures and at the same time introduces peoples, together with their cultures, into her own community." On the one hand the penetration of the Gospel into a given sociocultural milieu "gives inner fruitfulness to the spiritual qualities and gifts proper to each people . . . , strengthens these qualities, perfects them and restores them in Christ." On the other hand, the Church assimilates these values, when they are compatible with the Gospel, "to deepen understanding of Christ's message and
give it more effective expression in the liturgy and in the many different aspects of the life of the community of believers."\(^\text{12}\) This double movement in the work of inculturation thus expresses one of the component elements of the mystery of the incarnation.\(^\text{13}\)

5. Inculturation thus understood has its place in worship as in other areas of the life of the Church.\(^\text{14}\) It constitutes one of the aspects of the inculturation of the Gospel, which calls for true integration\(^\text{15}\) in the life of faith of each people of the permanent values of a culture, rather than their transient expressions. It must, then, be in full solidarity with a much greater action, a unified pastoral strategy which takes account of the human situation.\(^\text{16}\) As in all forms of the work of evangelization, this patient and complex undertaking calls for methodical research and ongoing discernment.\(^\text{17}\) The inculturation of the Christian life and of liturgical celebrations must be the fruit of a progressive maturity in the faith of the people.\(^\text{18}\)

6. The present instruction has different situations in view. There are in the first place those countries which do not have a Christian tradition or where the Gospel has been proclaimed in modern times by missionaries who brought the Roman rite with them. It is now more evident that "coming into contact with different cultures, the Church must welcome all that can be reconciled with the Gospel in the tradition of a people to bring to it the riches of Christ and to be enriched in turn by the many different forms of wisdom of the nations of the earth."\(^\text{19}\)

7. The situation is different in the countries with a long-standing Western Christian tradition, where the culture has already been penetrated for a long

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\(^{12}\) Ibid.


\(^{14}\) Cf. Eastern Code of Canon Law, Canon 584.2: "Evangelizatio gentium ita fiat, ut servata integritate fidei et morum Evangelium se in cultura singulorum populorum exprimere possit, in catechesi scilicet, in ritibus propriis liturgicis, in arte sacra, in iure particulari ac denum in toda vita ecclesialis."

\(^{15}\) Cf. *Catechesi Tradendae*, 53: "Concerning evangelization in general, we can say that it is a call to bring the strength of the Gospel to the heart of culture and cultures . . . . It is in this way that it can propose to cultures the knowledge of the mystery hidden and help them to make of their own living tradition original expressions of life, celebration and Christian thought."

\(^{16}\) Cf. *Redemptoris Missio*, 52: "Inculturation is a slow process covering the whole of missionary life and involves all who are active in the mission ad gentes, and Christian communities in the measure that they are developing." Discourse to Pontifical Council for Culture plenary assembly: "I strongly reaffirm the need to mobilize the whole Church into a creative effort toward a renewed evangelization of both people and cultures. It is only by a joint effort that the Church will be able to bring the hope of Christ into the heart of cultures and present-day ways of thinking."


\(^{18}\) Cf. John Paul II, discourse to the bishops of Zaire, April 12, 1983, No. 5: AAS 75 (1983), 620: "How is it that a faith which has truly matured, is deep and firm, does not succeed in expressing itself in a language, in a catechesis, in theological reflection, in prayer, in the liturgy, in art, in the institutions which are truly related to the African soul of your compatriots? There is the key to the important and complex question of the liturgy, to mention just one area. Satisfactory progress in this domain can only be the fruit of a progressive growth in faith, linked with spiritual discernment, theological clarity, a sense of the universal Church."

\(^{19}\) Discourse to Pontifical Council for Culture, 5: "In coming into contact with the cultures, the Church must welcome all that in the traditions of peoples is compatible with the Gospel, to give all the riches of Christ to them and to enrich itself of the varied wisdom of the nations of the earth."
time by the faith and the liturgy expressed in the Roman rite. That has helped the welcome given to liturgical reform in these countries, and the measures of adaptation envisaged in the liturgical books were considered, on the whole, sufficient to allow for legitimate local diversity (cf. below Nos. 53-61). In some countries, however, where several cultures coexist, especially as a result of immigration, it is necessary to take account of the particular problems which this poses (cf. below No. 49).

8. It is necessary to be equally attentive to the progressive growth both in countries with a Christian tradition and in others of a culture marked by indifference or disinterest in religion. In the face of this situation, it is not so much a matter of inculturation, which assumes that there are pre-existent religious values and evangelizes them, but rather a matter of insisting on liturgical formation and finding the most suitable means to read spirits and hearts.

The Process of Inculturation Throughout the History of Salvation

9. Light is shed upon the problems being posed about the inculturation of the Roman rite in the history of salvation. The process of inculturation was a process which developed in many ways. The people of Israel throughout its history preserved the certain knowledge that it was the chosen people of God, the witness of his action and love in the midst of the nations. It took from neighboring peoples certain forms of worship, but its faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob subjected these borrowings to profound modifications, principally changes of significance but also often changes in the form, as it incorporated these elements into its religious practice in order to celebrate the memory of God's wonderful deeds in its history.

The encounter between the Jewish world and Greek wisdom gave rise to a new form of inculturation: the translation of the Bible into Greek introduced the word of God into a world that had been closed to it and caused, under divine inspiration, an enrichment of the Scriptures.

10. “The law of Moses, the prophets and the psalms” (cf. Lk. 24.27 and 44) was a preparation for the coming of the Son of God upon earth. The Old Testament, comprising the life and culture of the people of Israel, is also the history of salvation.

On coming to the earth the Son of God, “born of a woman, born under the law” (Gal. 4.4), associated himself with social and cultural conditions of the people of the alliance, with whom he lived and prayed. In becoming a man he became a member of a people, a country and an epoch "and in a certain way,

20 Cf. discourse to the Pontifical Council for Culture, 5; cf. also Vicesimus Quintus Annus, 17.
21 Cf. Sacrosanctum Concilium, 19 and 35.
he thereby united himself to the whole human race.”

11. Christ, who wanted to share our human condition (cf. Heb. 2.14), died for all in order to gather into unity the scattered children of God (cf. Jn. 11.52). By his death he wanted to break down the wall of separation between mankind, to make Israel and the nations one people. By the power of his resurrection he drew all people to himself and created out of them a single new man (cf. Eph. 2.14-16; Jn. 12.32). In him a new world has been born (cf. 2 Cor. 5.16-17), and everyone can become a new creature. In him, darkness has given place to light, promise became reality and all the religious aspirations of humanity found their fulfillment. By the offering that he made of his body, once for all (cf. Heb. 10.10), Christ Jesus brought about the fullness of worship in spirit and in truth in the renewal which he wished for his disciples (cf. Jn. 4.23-24).

12. "In Christ...the fullness of divine worship has come to us." In him we have the high priest, taken from among men (cf. Heb. 5.1-5; 10.19-21), put to death in the flesh but brought to life in the spirit (cf. 1 Pt. 3.18). As Christ and Lord, he has made out of the new people “a kingdom of priests for God his Father” (cf. Rv. 1.6; 5.9-10). But before inaugurating by the shedding of his blood the paschal mystery, which constitutes the essential element of Christian worship, Christ wanted to institute the eucharist, the memorial of his death and resurrection, until he comes again. Here is to be found the fundamental principle of Christian liturgy and the kernel of its ritual expression.

13. At the moment of his going to his Father, the risen Christ assures his disciples of his presence and sends them to proclaim the Gospel to the whole of creation, to make disciples of all nations and baptize them (cf. Mt. 28.15; Mk. 16.15; Acts 1.8). On the day of Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit created a new community within the human race, uniting all in spite of the differences of language, which were a sign of division (cf. Acts 2.1-11). Henceforth the wonders of God will be made known to people of every language and culture (cf. Acts 10.44-48). Those redeemed by the blood of the Lamb and united in fraternal communion (cf. Acts 2.42) are called from “every tribe, language, people and nation” (cf. Rv. 5.9).

14. Faith in Christ offers to all nations the possibility of being beneficiaries of the promise and of sharing in the heritage of the people of the covenant (cf. Eph. 3.6), without renouncing their culture. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, following the example of St. Peter (cf. Acts 10), St. Paul opened the doors of the Church, not keeping the Gospel within the restrictions of the Mosaic law but keeping what he himself had received of the tradition which came from the Lord (cf. 1 Cor. 11.23). Thus, from the beginning, the Church did not demand of converts who were uncircumcised “anything beyond what

23 Gaudium et Spes, 22.
24 St. Cyril of Alexandria, In Ioannem, I, 14: Patrologia Graeca 73, 162C.
25 Sacrosanctum Concilium, 5.
27 Cf. Roman Missal, Fifth Weekday of the Passion of the Lord, 5: Prayer One: "... per suum cruorem instituit paschale mysterium."
was necessary” according to the decision of the apostolic assembly of Jerusalem (cf. Acts 15.28).

15. In gathering together to break the bread on the first day of the week, which became the day of the Lord (cf. Acts 20.7; Rv. 1.10), the first Christian communities followed the command of Jesus who, in the context of the memorial of the Jewish pasch, instituted the memorial of his passion. In continuity with the unique history of salvation, they spontaneously took the forms and texts of Jewish worship and adapted them to express the radical newness of Christian worship. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, discernment was exercised between what could be kept and what was to be discarded of the Jewish heritage of worship.

16. The spread of the Gospel in the world gave rise to other types of ritual in the churches coming from the gentiles, under the influence of different cultural traditions. Under the constant guidance of the Holy Spirit, discernment was exercised to distinguish those elements coming from “pagan” cultures which were incompatible with Christianity from those which could be accepted in harmony with apostolic tradition and in fidelity to the Gospel of salvation.

17. The creation and the development of the forms of Christian celebration developed gradually according to local conditions in the great cultural areas where the good news was proclaimed. Thus were born distinct liturgical families of the churches of the West and of the East. Their rich patrimony preserves faithfully the Christian tradition in its fullness. The Church of the West has sometimes drawn elements of its liturgy from the patrimony of the liturgical families of the East. The Church adopted in its liturgy the living language of the people, first Greek and then Latin, and, like other Latin churches, accepted into its worship important events of social life and gave them a Christian significance. During the course of the centuries, the Roman rite has known how to integrate texts, chants, gestures and rites from various sources and to adapt itself in local cultures in mission territories, even if at certain periods a desire for liturgical uniformity obscured this fact.

18. In our own time, the Second Vatican Council recalled that the Church “fosters and assumes the ability, resources and customs of each people. In assuming them, the culture purifies, strengthens and ennobles them. Whatever good lies latent in the religious practices and cultures of diverse peoples, it is not only saved from destruction but it is also cleansed, raised up and made perfect unto the glory of God, the confounding of the devil, and the
happiness of mankind."34 So the liturgy of the Church must not be foreign to any country, people or individual, and at the same time it should transcend the particularity of race and nation. It must be capable of expressing itself in every human culture, all the while maintaining its identity through fidelity to the tradition which comes to it from the Lord.35

19. The liturgy, like the Gospel, must respect cultures, but at the same time invite them to purify and sanctify themselves.

In adhering to Christ by faith, the Jews remained faithful to the Old Testament, which led to Jesus, the Messiah of Israel; they knew that he had fulfilled the Mosaic alliance, as the mediator of the new and eternal covenant, sealed in his blood on the cross. They knew that, by his one perfect sacrifice, he is the authentic high priest and the definitive temple (cf. Heb. 6:10), and the prescriptions of circumcision (cf. Gal. 5.1-6), the Sabbath (cf. Mt. 12.8 and similar),36 and the sacrifices of the temple (cf. Heb. 10) become of only relative significance.

In a more radical way Christians coming from paganism had to renounce idols, myths, superstitions (cf. Acts 19.18-19; 1 Cor. 10.14-22; 2.20-22; 1 Jn. 5.21) when they adhered to Christ.

But whatever their ethnic or cultural origin, Christians have to recognize the promise, the prophecy and the history of their salvation in the history of Israel. They must accept as the word of God the books of the Old Testament as well as those of the New.37 They welcome the sacramental signs, which can only be understood fully in the context of Holy Scripture and the life of the Church.38

20. The challenge which faced the first Christians, whether they came from the chosen people or from a pagan background, was to reconcile the renunciations demanded by faith in Christ with fidelity to the culture and traditions of the people to which they belonged.

And so it will be for Christians of all times, as the words of St. Paul affirm: "We proclaim Christ crucified, scandal for the Jews, foolishness for the pagans" (1 Cor. 1.23).

The discernment exercised during the course of the Church's history remains necessary, so that through the liturgy the work of salvation accomplished by Christ may continue faithfully in the Church by the power of the Spirit in different countries and times and in different human cultures.

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34 Lumen Gentium, 17, also 13.
35 Cf. Catechesi Tradendae, 52-53; Redemptoris Missio, 53-54; Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1204-1206.
36 Cf., also St. Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Magnesians, 9: Funk I, 199: "We have seen how former adherents of the ancient customs have since attained to a new hope; so that they have given up keeping the sabbath, and now order their lives by the Lord’s day instead."
37 Cf. Vatican Council II, Dei Verbum, 14-16; Ordo Lectionum Missae, ed. typica altera, Praenotanda, 5: "It is the same mystery of Christ that the Church announces when she proclaims the Old and New Testament in the celebration of the liturgy. The New Testament is, indeed, hidden in the Old and, in the New the Old is revealed. Because Christ is the center and fullness of all Scripture, as also of the whole liturgical celebration"; Catechism of the Catholic Church, 120-123, 128-130, 1093-1095.
38 Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1093-1096.
The Requirements and Preliminary Conditions for Liturgical Inculturation

Requirements Emerging from the Nature of the Liturgy

21. Before any research on inculturation begins, it is necessary to keep in mind the nature of the liturgy. It "is, in fact the privileged place where Christians meet God and the one whom he has sent, Jesus Christ" (cf. Jn. 17.3).\(^39\) It is at once the action of Christ the priest and the action of the Church which is his body, because in order to accomplish his work of glorifying God and sanctifying mankind, achieved through visible signs, he always associates with himself the Church, which, through him and in the Holy Spirit, gives the Father the worship which is pleasing to him.\(^40\)

22. The nature of the liturgy is intimately linked up with the nature of the Church; indeed, it is above all in the liturgy that the nature of the Church is manifested.\(^41\) Now the Church has specific characteristics which distinguish it from every other assembly and community.

It is not gathered together by a human decision, but is called by God in the Holy Spirit and responds in faith to his gratuitous call (\textit{ekklesia} derives from \textit{klesia}, "call"). This singular characteristic of the Church is revealed by its coming together as a priestly people, especially on the Lord's day, by the word which God addresses to his people and by the ministry of the priest, who through the sacrament of orders acts in the person of Christ the head.\(^42\)

Because it is catholic, the Church overcomes the barriers which divide humanity: By baptism all become children of God and form in Christ one people where "there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female" (Gal. 3.28). Thus Church is called to gather all peoples, to speak the languages, to penetrate all cultures.

Finally, the Church is a pilgrim on the earth far from the Lord (cf. 2 Cor. 5.6): It bears the marks of the present time in the sacraments and in its institutions, but is waiting in joyful hope for the coming of Jesus Christ (cf. Ti. 2.13).\(^43\) This is expressed in the prayers of petition: It shows that we are citizens of heaven (cf. Phil. 3.20), at the same time attentive to the needs of mankind and of society (cf. 1 Tim. 2.1-4).

23. The Church is nourished on the word of God written in the Old and New Testaments. When the Church proclaims the word in the liturgy, it welcomes it as a way in which Christ is present: "It is he who speaks when the sacred

\(^{39}\) \textit{Vicesimus Quintus Annus}, 7.
\(^{40}\) Cf. \textit{Sacrosanctum Concilium}, 5-7.
\(^{41}\) Cf. ibid., 2; \textit{Vicesimus Quintus Annus}, 9.
Scriptures are read in church."  

44 For this reason the word of God is so important in the celebration of the liturgy  
that the holy Scripture must not be replaced by any other text, no matter how venerable it may be. Likewise the Bible is the indispensable source of the liturgy’s language, of its signs and of its prayer, especially in the psalms.

45 Since the Church is the fruit of Christ’s sacrifice, the liturgy is always the celebration of the paschal mystery of Christ, the glorification of God the Father and the sanctification of mankind by the power of the Holy Spirit. Christian worship thus finds its most fundamental expression when every Sunday throughout the whole world Christians gather around the altar under the leadership of the priest, celebrate the eucharist, listen to the word of God, and recall the death and resurrection of Christ, while awaiting his coming in glory.

46 Around this focal point, the paschal mystery is made present in different ways in the celebration of each of the sacraments.

25. The whole life of the liturgy gravitates in the first place around the eucharistic sacrifice and the other sacraments given by Christ to his Church. The Church has the duty to transmit them carefully and faithfully to every generation. In virtue of its pastoral authority, the Church can make dispositions to provide for the good of the faithful, according to circumstances, times and places. But it has no power over the things which are directly related to the will of Christ and which constitute the unchangeable part of the liturgy. To break the link that the sacraments have with Christ, who instituted them, and with the very beginnings of the Church, would no longer be to inculturate them, but to empty them of their substance.

26. The Church of Christ is made present and signified in a given place and in a given time by the local or particular churches, which through the liturgy reveal the Church in its true nature. That is why every particular church must be united with the universal Church not only in belief and sacramentals, but also in those practices received through the Church as part of the uninterrupted
apostolic tradition.55 This includes, for example, daily prayer,56 sanctification of Sunday and the rhythm of the week, the celebration of Easter and the unfolding of the mystery of Christ throughout the liturgical year,57 the practice of penance and fasting,58 the sacraments of Christian initiation, the celebration of the memorial of the Lord and the relationship between the liturgy of the Word and the eucharistic liturgy, the forgiveness of sins, the ordained ministry, marriage and the anointing of the sick.

27. In the liturgy the faith of the Church is expressed in a symbolic and commu­nitarian form: This explains the need for a legislative framework for the organi­zation of worship, the preparation of texts and the celebration of rites.59 The reason for the preceptive character of this legislation throughout the centuries and still today is to ensure the orthodoxy of worship: that is to say, not only to avoid errors, but also to pass on the faith in its integrity so that the “rule of prayer” (lex orandi) of the Church may correspond to “rule of faith” (lex credendi).60

However deep inculturation may go, the liturgy cannot do without legislation and guidance on the part of those who have received this responsibility in the Church: the Apostolic See and, according to the prescriptions of the law, the episcopal conference for its territory and the bishop for his diocese.61

Preliminary Conditions for Inculturation of the Liturgy

28. The missionary tradition of the Church has always sought to evangelize people in their own language. Often indeed, it was the first apostles of a country who wrote down languages which up till then had only been oral. And this is right, as it is by the mother language, which conveys the mentality and the culture of a people, that one can reach the soul, mold it in the Christian spirit and allow to share more deeply in the prayer of the Church.62

After the first evangelization, the proclamation of the word of God in the language of a country remains very useful for the people in their liturgical celebrations. The translation of the Bible, or at least of the biblical texts used in the liturgy, is the first necessary step in the process of the inculturation of the liturgy.63

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55 Cf. St. Irenaeus, Against the Heresies, III, 2, 1-3; 3, 1-2; Sources Chrétiennes, 211, 24-31; cf. St. Augustine, Letter to Januarius 54, I: PL 33, 200: “But regarding those other observances which we keep and all the world keeps, and which do not derive from Scripture but from tradition, we are given to understand that they have been ordained or recommended to be kept by the apostles themselves or by the plenary councils, whose authority is well founded in the Church”; cf. Redemptoris Missio, 53-54; cf. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Letter to Bishops of the Catholic Church on Certain Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion, May 28, 1992, Nos. 7-10.

56 Cf. Sacrosanctum Concilium, 83.

57 Cf. ibid., 102, 106 and Appendix.


59 Cf. Sacrosanctum Concilium, 22; 26; 28; 40, 3 and 128; Code of Canon Law, Canon 2 and passim.


61 Cf. Sacrosanctum Concilium, 22; 36; 40; 44-46; Canons 47ff and 838.

62 Cf. Redemptoris Missio, 53.

63 Cf. Sacrosanctum Concilium, 35 and 36; Canon 825.1.
So that the word of God may be received in a right and fruitful way, "it is necessary to foster a taste for holy Scripture, as is witnessed by the ancient traditions of the rites of both East and West." Thus inculturation of the liturgy presupposes the reception of the sacred Scripture into a given culture.

29. The different situations in which the Church finds itself are an important factor in judging the degree of liturgical inculturation that is necessary. The situation of countries that were evangelized centuries ago and where the Christian faith continues to influence the culture is different from countries where the Gospel has not penetrated deeply into cultural values. Different again is the situation of a church where Christians are a minority of the population. A more complex situation is found when the population has different languages and cultures. A precise evaluation of the situation is necessary in order to achieve satisfactory solutions.

30. To prepare an inculturation of the liturgy, episcopal conferences should call upon people who are competent both in the liturgical tradition of the Roman rite and in the appreciation of local cultural values. Preliminary studies of a historical, anthropological, exegetical and theological character are necessary. But these need to be examined in the light of the pastoral experience of the local clergy, especially those born in the country. The advice of "wise people" of the country, whose human wisdom is enriched by the light of the Gospel, would also be valuable. Liturgical inculturation should try to satisfy the needs of traditional culture and at the same time take account of the needs of those affected by an urban and industrial culture.

The Responsibility of the Episcopal Conference

31. Since it is a question of local culture, it is understandable that the constitution Sacrosanctum Concilium assigned special responsibility in this matter to the "various kinds of competent territorial bodies of bishops legitimately established." In regard to this, episcopal conferences must consider "carefully and prudently what elements taken from the traditions and cultures of individual peoples may properly be admitted into divine worship." They can sometimes introduce "into the liturgy such elements as are not bound up with superstition and error . . . provided they are in keeping with the true and authentic spirit of the liturgy."

32. Conferences may determine, according to the procedure given below (cf. Nos. 62 and 65-69), whether the introduction into the liturgy of elements

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64 Sacrosanctum Concilium, 24.
65 Cf. ibid.; Catechesi Tradendae, 55.
66 In the constitution Sacrosanctum Concilium attention is drawn to Nos. 38 and 40: "above all in the missions."
67 Cf. Ad Gentes, 16 and 17.
68 Cf. ibid., 19.
69 Sacrosanctum Concilium, 22; cf. ibid., 39 and 40; Canons 447-448ff.
70 Sacrosanctum Concilium, 40.
71 Ibid., 37.
borrowed from the social and religious rites of a people, and which form a living part of their culture, will enrich their understanding of liturgical actions without producing negative effects on their faith and piety. They will always be careful to avoid the danger of introducing elements that might appear to the faithful as the return to a period before evangelization (cf. below No. 47).

In any case, if changes in rites or texts are judged to be necessary, they must be harmonized with the rest of the liturgical life and, before being put into practice, still more before being made mandatory, they should first be presented to the clergy and then to the faithful in such a way as to avoid the danger of troubling them without good reason (cf. below, Nos. 46 and 69).

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**Principles and Practical Norms for the Inculturation of the Roman Rite**

**33.** As particular Churches, especially the young Churches, deepen their understanding of the liturgical heritage they have received from the Roman Church which gave them birth, they will be able in turn to find in their own cultural heritage appropriate forms which can be integrated into the Roman rite where this is judged useful and necessary.

The liturgical formation of the faithful and the clergy, which is called for the constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium,*² ought to help them to understand the meaning of the texts and the rites given in the present liturgical books. Often this will mean that elements which come from the tradition of the Roman rite do not have to be changed or suppressed.

**General Principles**

**34.** In the planning and execution of the inculturation of the Roman rite, the following points should be kept in mind: 1) the goal of inculturation; 2) the substantial unity of the Roman rite; 3) the competent authority.

**35.** The *goal* which should guide the inculturation of the Roman rite is that laid down by the Second Vatican Council as the basis of the general restoration of the liturgy: "Both texts and rites should be so drawn up that they express more clearly the holy things they signify and so that the Christian people, as far as possible, may be able to understand them with ease and to take part in the rites fully, actively and as befits a community."³

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² Cf. ibid., 14-19.
³ Ibid., 21.
Rites also need "to be adapted to the capacity of the faithful and that there should not be a need for numerous explanations for them to be understood."74 However, the nature of the liturgy always has to be borne in mind, as does the biblical and traditional character of its structure and the particular way in which it is expressed (cf. above Nos. 21-27).

36. The process of inculturation should maintain the substantial unity of the Roman rite.75 This unity is currently expressed in the typical editions of liturgical books, published by authority of the supreme pontiff and in the liturgical books approved by the episcopal conferences for their areas and confirmed by the Apostolic See.76 The work of inculturation does not foresee the creation of new families of rites; inculturation responds to the needs of a particular culture and leads to adaptations which still remain part of the Roman rite.77

37. Adaptations of the Roman rite, even in the field of inculturation, depend completely on the authority of the Church. This authority belongs to the Apostolic See, which exercises it through the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments;78 it also belongs, within the limits fixed by law, to episcopal conferences79 and to the diocesan bishop.80 "No other person, not even if he is a priest, may on his own initiative add, remove or change anything in the liturgy."81 Inculturation is not left to the personal initiative of celebrants or to the collective initiative of an assembly.82

Likewise concessions granted to one region cannot be extended to other regions without the necessary authorization, even if an episcopal conference considers that there are sufficient reasons for adopting such measures in its own area.

74 Cf. ibid., 34.
75 Cf. ibid., 37-40.
76 Cf. Vicesimus Quintus Annus, 16.
77 Cf. John Paul II, discourse to the plenary assembly of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Jan. 26, 1991, 3: AAS 83 (1991), 940: "This is not to suggest to the particular churches that they have a new task to undertake following the application of liturgical reform, that is to say, adaptation or inculturation. Nor is it intended to mean inculturation as the creation of alternative rites . . . . It is a question of collaborating so that the Roman rite, maintaining its own identity, may incorporate suitable adaptations."
78 Cf. Sacrosanctum Concilium, 22; Canons 838.1 and 838.2; John Paul II, apostolic constitution Pastor Bonus, 62, 64.3: AAS 80 (1988), 876-877; Vicesimus Quintus Annus, 19.
79 Cf. Sacrosanctum Concilium, 22 and Canons 447ff and 838.1 and 838.3; Vicesimus Quintus Annus, 20.
80 Cf. Sacrosanctum Concilium, 22, and Canons 838.1 and 838.4; Vicesimus Quintus Annus, 21.
81 Cf. Sacrosanctum Concilium, 22.
82 The situation is different when, in the liturgical books published after the constitution, the introductions and the rubrics envisaged adaptations and the possibility of leaving a choice to the pastoral sensitivity of the one presiding, for example, when it says "if it is opportune," "in these or similar terms," "also," "according to circumstances," "either . . . or," "if convenient," "normally," "the most suitable form can be chosen." In making a choice, the celebrant should seek the good of the assembly, taking into account the spiritual preparation and mentality of the participants rather than his own preferences or the easiest solution. In celebrations for particular groups, other possibilities are available. Nonetheless, prudence and discretion are always called for in order to avoid the breaking up of the local church into little "churches" or "chapels" closed in upon themselves.
Adaptations Which Can Be Made

38. In an analysis of a liturgical action with a view to its inculturation, it is necessary to consider the traditional value of the elements of the action and in particular their biblical or patristic origin (cf. above Nos. 21-26), because it is not sufficient to distinguish between what can be changed and what is unchangeable.

39. Language, which is a means of communication between people. In liturgical celebrations its purpose is to announce to the faithful the good news of salvation and to express the Church’s prayer to the Lord. For this reason it must always express, along with the truths of the faith, the grandeur and holiness of the mysteries which are being celebrated.

Careful consideration therefore needs to be given to determine which elements in the language of the people can properly be introduced into liturgical celebrations, and in particular whether it is suitable or not to use expressions from non-Christian religions. It is just as important to take account of the different literary genres used in the liturgy: biblical texts, presidential prayers, psalmody, acclamations, refrains, responsories, hymns and litanies.

40. Music and singing, which express the soul of people, have pride of place in the liturgy. And so singing must be promoted, in the first place singing the liturgical texts, so that the voices of the faithful may be heard in the liturgical actions themselves. "In some parts of the world, especially mission lands, there are people who have their own musical traditions, and these play a great part in their religious and social life. Due importance is to be attached to their music and a suitable place given to it, not only in forming their attitude toward religion, but also in adapting worship to their native genius."

It is important to note that a text which is sung is more deeply engraved in the memory than when it is read, which means that it is necessary to be demanding about the biblical and liturgical inspiration and the literary quality of texts which are meant to be sung.

Musical forms, melodies and musical instruments could be used in divine worship as long as they "are suitable, or can be made suitable, for sacred use, and provided they are in accord with the dignity of the place of worship and truly contribute to the uplifting of the faithful."

41. The liturgy is an action, and so gesture and posture are especially important. Those which belong to the essential rites of the sacraments and which are required for their validity must be preserved just as they have been approved or determined by the supreme authority of the Church.

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83 Cf. Canons 762-772, especially 769.
84 Cf. Sacrosanctum Concilium, 118; also No. 54: While allowing that "a suitable place be allotted to the language of the country" in the chants, "steps should be taken so that the faithful may also be able to say or sign together in Latin those parts of the ordinary of the Mass which pertain to them," especially the Our Father, cf. Roman Missal, General Instruction, 19.
85 Ibid., 120.
86 Ct. Canon 841.
The gestures and postures of the celebrating priest must express his special function: He presides over the assembly in the person of Christ.88

The gestures and postures of the assembly are signs of its unity and express its active participation and foster the spiritual attitude of the participants.89 Each culture will choose those gestures and bodily postures which express the attitude of humanity before God, giving them a Christian significance, having some relationship if possible, with the gestures and postures of the Bible.

42. Among some peoples, singing is instinctively accompanied by hand-clapping, rhythmic swaying and dance movements on the part of the participants. Such forms of external expression can have a place in the liturgical actions of these peoples on condition that they are always the expression of true communal prayer of adoration, praise, offering and supplication, and not simply a performance.

43. The liturgical celebration is enriched by the presence of art, which helps the faithful to celebrate, meet God and pray. Art in the Church, which is made up of all peoples and nations, should enjoy the freedom of expression as long as it enhances the beauty of the buildings and liturgical rites, investing them with the respect and honour which is their due.90 The arts should also be truly significant in the life and tradition of the people.

The same applies to the shape, location and decoration of the altar,91 the place for the proclamation of the word of God92 and for baptism,93 all the liturgical furnishings, vessels, vestments and colours.94 Preference should be given to materials, forms and colours which are in use in the country.

44. The constitution Sacrosanctum Concilium has firmly maintained the constant practice of the Church of encouraging the veneration by the faithful of images of Christ, the Virgin Mary and the saints,95 because the honour "given to the image is given to its subject."96 In different cultures believers can be helped in their prayer and in their spiritual life by seeing works of art which attempt, according to the genius of the people, to express the divine mysteries.

45. Alongside liturgical celebrations and related to them, in some particular Churches there are various manifestations of popular devotion. These were sometimes introduced by missionaries at the time of the initial evangelization, and they often develop according to local custom.

88 Cf. Sacrosanctum Concilium, 33; Canon 899.2.
89 Cf. Sacrosanctum Concilium, 30.
90 Cf. ibid., 123-124; Canon 1216.
91 Cf. Roman Missal, General Instruction, 259-270; Canons 1235-1239, especially 1236.
92 Cf. Roman Missal, General Instruction, 272.
94 Cf. Roman Missal, General Instruction, 287-310.
95 Cf. Sacrosanctum Concilium, 125; Lumen Gentium, 67; Canon 1188.
The introduction of devotional practices into liturgical celebrations under the pretext of inculturation cannot be allowed "because by its nature, [the liturgy] is superior to them."\(^{97}\)

It belongs to the local ordinary\(^{98}\) to organize such devotions, to encourage them as supports for the life and faith of Christians, and to purify them when necessary, because they need to be constantly permeated by the Gospel.\(^{99}\) He will take care to ensure that they do not replace liturgical celebrations or become mixed up with them.\(^{100}\)

### Necessary Prudence

46. "Innovations should only be made when the good of the Church genuinely and certainly requires them; care must be taken that any new forms adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already existing."\(^{101}\)

This norm was given in the constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* in relation to the restoration of the liturgy, and it also applies, in due measure, to the inculturation of the Roman rite. In this field changes need to be gradual and adequate explanation given in order to avoid the danger of rejection or simply an artificial grafting onto previous forms.

47. The liturgy is the expression of faith and Christian life, and so it is necessary to ensure that liturgical inculturation is not marked, even in appearance, by religious syncretism. This would be the case if the places of worship, the liturgical objects and vestments, gestures and postures let it appear as if rites had the same significance in Christian celebrations as they did before evangelization. The syncretism will be still worse if biblical readings and chants (cf. above No. 26) or the prayers were replaced by texts from other religions, even if these contain an undeniable religious and moral value.\(^{102}\)

48. The constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* envisaged the admission of rites or gestures according to local custom into rituals of Christian initiation, marriage and funerals.\(^{103}\) This is a stage of inculturation, but there is also the danger that the truth of the Christian rite and the expression of the Christian faith could be easily diminished in the eyes of the faithful. Fidelity to traditional usages must be accompanied by purification and, if necessary, a break with the past. The same applies, for example, to the possibilities of Christianizing pagan festivals or holy places, or to the priest using the signs of authority reserved to the heads of civil society or for the veneration of ancestors. In

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\(^{97}\) *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 13.

\(^{98}\) Cf. Canon 839.2.

\(^{99}\) *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, 18.

\(^{100}\) Cf. ibid.

\(^{101}\) *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 23.

\(^{102}\) These texts can be used profitably in the homily because it is one of the tasks of the homily "to show the points of convergence between revealed divine wisdom and noble human thought, seeking the truth by various paths" (John Paul II, apostolic letter *Dominicae Cenae*, Feb. 24, 1980, No. 10: *AAS* 72 (1980), 137).

every case it is necessary to avoid any ambiguity. Obviously the Christian liturgy cannot accept magic rites, superstition, spiritism; vengeance or rites with a sexual connotation.

49. In a number of countries there are several cultures which coexist and sometimes influence each other in such a way as to lead gradually to the formation of a new culture, while at times they seek to affirm their proper identity or even oppose each other in order to stress their own existence. It can happen that customs may have little more than folkloric interest. The episcopal conference will examine each case individually with care: They should respect the riches of each culture and those who defend them, but they should not ignore or neglect a minority culture with which they are not familiar. They should weigh the risk of a Christian community becoming inward looking and also the use of inculturation for political ends. In those countries with a customary culture, account must also be taken of the extent to which modernization has affected the people.

50. Sometimes there are many languages in use in the one country, even though each one may be spoken only by a small group of persons or a single tribe. In such cases a balance must be found which respects the individual rights of these groups or tribes but without carrying to extremes the localization of the liturgical celebrations. It is also sometimes possible that a country may be moving toward the use of a principal language.

51. To promote liturgical inculturation in a cultural area bigger than one country, the episcopal conferences concerned must work together and decide the measures which have to be taken so that “as far as possible, there are not notable ritual differences in regions bordering on one another.”

Areas of Adaptation in the Roman Rite

52. The constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* had in mind an inculturation of the Roman rite when it gave norms for the adaptation of the liturgy to the mentality and needs of different peoples, when it provided for a degree of adaptation in the liturgical books (cf. below Nos. 53-61), and also when it envisaged the possibility of more profound adaptations in some circumstances, especially in mission countries (cf. below Nos. 63-64).

Adaptations in the Liturgical Books

53. The first significant measure of inculturation is the translation of liturgical books into the language of the people. The completion of translations and their revision, where necessary, should be effected according to the directives given by the Holy See on this subject. Different literary genres are to be

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104 *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 23.
105 Cf. ibid., 36; 54; 63.
respected, and the content of the texts of the Latin typical edition is to be preserved; at the same time the translations must be understandable to participants (cf. above No. 39), suitable for proclamation and singing, with appropriate responses and acclamations by the assembly.

All peoples, even the most primitive, have a religious language which is suitable for expressing prayer, but liturgical language has its own special characteristics: It is deeply impregnated by the Bible; certain words in current Latin use (memoria, sacramentum) took on a new meaning in the Christian faith. Certain Christian expressions can be transmitted from one language to another, as has happened in the past, for example in the case of ecclesia, evangelium, baptisma, eucharistia.

Moreover, translations must be attentive to the relationship between the text and the liturgical action, aware of the needs of oral communication and sensitive to the literary qualities of the living language of the people. The qualities needed for liturgical translations are also required in the case of new compositions, when they are envisaged.

54. For the celebration of the eucharist, the Roman Missal, "while allowing ... for legitimate differences and adaptations according to the prescriptions of the Second Vatican Council," must remain "a sign and instrument of unity"107 of the Roman rite in different languages. The General Instruction on the Roman Missal foresees that "in accordance with the constitution on the liturgy, each conference of bishops has the power to lay down norms for its own territory that are suited to the traditions and character of peoples, regions and different communities."108 The same also applies to the gestures and postures of the faithful,109 the ways in which the altar and the book of the Gospels are venerated,110 the texts of the opening chants,111 the song at the preparation of the gifts112 and the communion song,113 the rite of peace,114 conditions regulating communion with the chalice,115 the materials for the construction of the altar and liturgical furniture,116 the material and form of sacred vessels,117 liturgical vestments.118 Episcopal conferences can also determine the manner of distributing communion.119

55. For the other sacraments and for sacramentals, the Latin typical edition of each ritual indicates the adaptations which pertain to the episcopal

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108 Roman Missal, General Instruction, 6; cf. also Ordo Lectionum Missae, editio typica altera, Praenotanda, 111-118.
109 Roman Missal, General Instruction, 22.
110 Cf. ibid., 232.
111 Cf. ibid., 26.
112 Cf. ibid., 50.
113 Cf. ibid., 56 i.
114 Cf. ibid., 56 b.
115 Cf. ibid., 242.
116 Cf. ibid., 263 and 288.
117 Cf. ibid., 290.
118 Cf. ibid., 304, 305, 308.
conference[s] or to individual bishops in particular circumstances. These adaptations concern texts, gestures and sometimes the ordering of the rite. When the typical edition gives alternative formulas, conferences of bishops can add other formulas of the same kind.

56. For the rite of Christian initiation, episcopal conferences are "to examine with care and prudence what can properly be admitted from the traditions and character of each people" and "in mission countries to judge whether initiation ceremonies practiced among the people can be adapted into the rite of Christian initiation and to decide whether they should be used." It is necessary to remember, however, that the term initiation does not have the same meaning or designate the same reality when it is used of social rites of initiation among certain peoples or when it is contrary to the process of Christian initiation, which leads through the rites of the catechumenate to incorporation into Christ in the Church by means of the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and eucharist.

57. In many places it is the marriage rite that calls for the greatest degree of adaptation so as not to be foreign to social customs. To adapt it to the customs of different regions and peoples, each episcopal conference has the "faculty to prepare its own proper marriage rite, which must always conform to the law which requires that the ordained minister or the assisting layperson, according to the case, must ask for and obtain the consent of the contracting parties and give them the nuptial blessing." This proper rite must obviously bring out clearly the Christian meaning of marriage, emphasize the grace of the sacrament and underline the duties of the spouses.

58. Among all peoples, funerals are always surrounded with special rites, often of great expressive value. To answer to the needs of different countries, the Roman Ritual offers several forms of funerals. Episcopal conferences must choose those which correspond best to local customs. They will wish to preserve all that is good in family tradition and local customs, and ensure that funeral rites manifest the Christian faith in the resurrection and bear witness to

120 Cf. Ordo Initiationis Christianae Adulorum, Praenotanda Generalia, 30-33; Praenotanda, 12, 20, 47, 64-65; Ordo, 312; Appendix, 12; Ordo Baptismi Parvulorum, Praenotanda, 8, 23-25; Ordo Confirmationis, Praenotanda, 11-12, 16-17; De Sacra Communione et de Cultu Mysterii Eucharistici Extra Missam, Praenotanda, 12; Ordo Paenitentiae, Praenotanda, 35b, 38; Ordo Unctionis Infirmorum Eorumque Pastoralis Curae, Praenotanda, 38-39; Ordo Celebrandi Matrimonium, editio typica altera, Praenotanda, 39-44; De Ordinatione Episcopi, Presbyterorum et Diaconorum, editio typica altera, Praenotanda, 11; De Benedictionibus, Praenotanda Generalia, 39.

121 Ibid., 31; cf. Sacrosanctum Concilium, 65.

122 Cf. Canons 1108 and 1112.

123 Ibid., 9 and 21.1-3.
the true values of the Gospel. It is in this perspective that funeral rituals can incorporate the customs of different cultures and respond as best they can to the needs and traditions of each region.

59. The blessing of persons, places or things touches the everyday life of the faithful and answers their immediate needs. They offer many possibilities for adaptation, for maintaining local customs and admitting popular usages. Episcopal conferences will be able to employ the foreseen dispositions and be attentive to the needs of the country.

60. As regards the liturgical year, each particular church and religious family adds its own celebrations to those of the universal church, after approval by the Apostolic See. Episcopal conferences can also, with the prior approval of the Apostolic See, suppress the obligation of certain feasts or transfer them to a Sunday. They also decide the time and manner of celebrating rogation tide and ember days.

61. The Liturgy of the Hours has as its goal the praise of God and the sanctification by prayer of the day and all human activity. Episcopal conferences can make adaptations in the second reading of the office of readings, hymns and intercessions and in the final Marian antiphons.

Procedure to Follow When Making the Adaptations Provided for in Liturgical Books

62. When an episcopal conference prepares its own edition of liturgical books, it decides about the translations and also the adaptations which are envisaged by the law. The acts of the conference, together with the final vote, are signed by the president and secretary of the conference and sent to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, along with two copies of the approved text.

Moreover along with the complete dossier should be sent:

• A succinct and precise explanation of the reasons for the adaptations that have been introduced.
• Indications as to which sections have been taken from other already approved liturgical books and which are newly composed.

After the recognition by the Apostolic See has been received according to the law, the episcopal conference promulgates the decree and determines the date when the new text comes into force.

129 Cf. ibid., 2.
130 Cf. Sacrosanctum Concilium, 81.
131 Cf. ibid., 79; De Benedictionibus, Praenotanda Generalia, 39; Ordo Professionis Religiosae, Praenotanda, 12-15.
133 Cf. Canon 1246.2.
135 Liturgia Horarum, Institutio Generalis, 92, 162, 178, 184.
136 Cf. Canons 455.2 and 838.3; that is also the case for a new edition, cf. Vicesimus Quintus Annus, 20.
137 Canon 838.3.
Adaptations Envisaged by No. 40 of the Conciliar Constitution on the Liturgy

63. Apart from the adaptation provided for in the liturgical books, it may be that "in some places and circumstances an even more radical adaptation of the liturgy is needed, and this entails greater difficulties."138 This is more than the sort of adaptations envisaged by the General Instructions and the Praenotanda of the liturgical books.

It presupposes that an episcopal conference has exhausted all the possibilities of adaptation offered by the liturgical books; that it has made an evaluation of the adaptations already introduced and maybe revised them before proceeding to more far-reaching adaptations.

The desirability or need for an adaptation of this sort can emerge in one of the areas mentioned above (cf. Nos. 53-61) without the others being affected. Moreover, adaptations of this kind do not envisage a transformation of the Roman rite, but are made within the context of the Roman rite.

64. In some places when there are still problems about the participation of the faithful, a bishop or several bishops can set out their difficulties to their colleagues in the episcopal conference and examine with them the desirability of introducing more profound adaptation, if the good of souls truly requires it.139

It is the function of episcopal conferences to propose to the Apostolic See the modifications it wishes to adopt following the procedure set out below:140

The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments is ready to receive the proposals of episcopal conferences and examine them, keeping in mind the good of the local churches concerned and the common good of the universal church, and to assist the process of inculturation where it is desirable or necessary. It will do this in accordance with the principles laid down in this instruction (cf. above, Nos. 33-51), and in a spirit of confident collaboration and shared responsibility.

Procedure to be Followed for the application of art. 40 of the Conciliar Constitution on the Liturgy

65. The episcopal conference will examine what has to be modified in liturgical celebrations because of the traditions and mentality of peoples. It will ask the national or regional liturgical commission to study the matter and examine the different aspects of the elements of local culture and their eventual inclusion in the liturgical celebration. The commission is to ensure that it receives the appropriate expert advice. It may be sometimes opportune to ask the advice of members of non-Christian religions about the religious or civil value of this or that element (cf. above Nos. 30-32).

138 Sacrosanctum Concilium, 40.
140 Cf. Sacrosanctum Concilium, 40.
If the situation requires it, this preliminary examination will be made in collaboration with the episcopal conferences of neighboring countries or those with the same culture (cf. above Nos. 33-51).

66. The episcopal conference will present the proposal to the congregation before any experimentation takes place. The presentation should include a description of the innovations proposed, the reasons for their adoption, the criteria used, the times and places chosen for a preliminary experiment and an indication which groups will make it, and finally the acts of the discussion and the vote of the conference.

After an examination of the proposal carried out together by the episcopal conference and the congregation, the latter will grant the episcopal conference a faculty to make an experiment for definite period of time, where this is appropriate.141

67. The episcopal conference will supervise the process of experimentation,142 normally with the help of the national or regional liturgical commission. The conference will also take care to ensure that the experimentation does not exceed the limits of time and place that were fixed. It will also ensure pastors and the faithful know about the limited and provisional nature of the experiment, and it will not give it publicity of a sort which could have an effect on the liturgical practice of the country. At the end of the period of experimentation, the episcopal conference will decide whether it matches up to the goal that was proposed or whether it needs revision, and it will communicate its conclusions to the congregation along with full information about the experiment.

68. After examining the dossier, the congregation will issue a decree giving its consent, possibly with some qualifications, so that the changes can be introduced into the territory covered by the episcopal conference.

69. The faithful, both lay people and clergy, should be well informed about the changes and prepared for their introduction into the liturgical celebrations. The changes are to be put into effect as circumstances require, with a transition period if this is appropriate (cf. above No. 61).

Conclusion

70. The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments presents these rules to the episcopal conferences to govern the work of liturgical inculturation envisaged by the Second Vatican Council as a response to the pastoral needs of peoples of different cultures. Liturgical inculturation should be carefully integrated into a pastoral plan for the inculturation of the Gospel into the many different human situations that are to be found. The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments hopes that each particular Church, especially the young churches, will discover that

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141 Cf. ibid., 40.
142 Cf. ibid.
the diversity of certain elements of liturgical celebrations can be a source of enrichment, while respecting the substantial unity of the Roman rite, the unity of the whole Church and the integrity of the faith transmitted to the saints for all time (cf. Jude 3).

The present instruction was prepared by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, by order of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, who approved it and ordered that it be published.


Cardinal Antonio M. Javierre Ortas, prefect
Archbishop Geraldo Agnelo, secretary

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THE CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS MASSES

The following guidelines were prepared by the National Liturgical Office at the request of the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy and the National Council for Liturgy. These were originally printed in Bulletin 118, Non-Verbal Dimensions of the Eucharist, September 1989, pages 191-196.

The Establishment of the Feast

In 274, the Roman emperor Aurelian established December 25 as the feast of the unconquered sun. This feast which occurred at the time of the winter solstice was adopted by Christians following the Council of Nicea (325) and given a new meaning. Instead of celebrating the birth of the unconquered sun, Christians celebrated the mystery of the Incarnation: the birth of Christ who is the “light that shines in the dark, a light that darkness could not overpower” (John 1: 5).

The Liturgical Celebration of the Feast

Mass During the Day: In Rome the eucharistic celebration of the feast originally took place at the newly constructed basilica of St. Peter on the Vatican Hill. Early sources indicate that this celebration occurred at the usual morning hour, around 9:00 a.m. The lectionary texts assigned to this liturgy were Isaiah 52: 6-10, Hebrews 1: 1-12, and John 1: 1-14. These same texts are proclaimed today in the Mass during the Day.

Vigil and Mass at Midnight: Following the construction of the Roman basilica of St. Mary Major (c. 440) and the addition of a side chapel corresponding to the Cave of the Nativity in Bethlehem, elements of the liturgical celebration of the Epiphany in Bethlehem were transferred to Rome. They included a vigil at the basilica in the evening before the feast and a nighttime celebration of the eucharist at its conclusion.

During the vigil, the Matthean account of the birth of Christ was proclaimed (Matthew 1: 18-21). This same text was incorporated into the Vigil Mass (December 24) which developed later. In the present lectionary, this text has been extended to include the genealogy of Jesus (Matthew 1: 1-25).

The nighttime eucharist eventually developed into the Mass at Midnight in Rome. The epistle used in Bethlehem (Titus 2: 11-14) was incorporated into this celebration together with Luke 2: 18-20. The epistle has been retained in the present lectionary. The gospel, however, has been transferred to the Mass at Dawn and replaced by Luke 2: 1-14.

Over the years, the Mass at Midnight has enjoyed great popularity. The dramatic description of the events surrounding the birth of Christ in the gospel for this Mass seems to appeal to people's imagination more than the Johannine proclamation of the mystery of the Incarnation in the Mass During the Day. In addition, the darkness of the midnight celebration draws
people to the light and darkness motifs of the feast. The holy night is made radiant with the splendor of Jesus Christ, the true light of the world. (See the opening prayer for the Mass at Midnight.)

**Mass at Dawn:** In the late sixth century, the Byzantine ambassadors living in Rome celebrated the commemoration of St. Anastasia on December 25 at the church which bears her name. In deference to the ambassadors, the pope began to celebrate the eucharist there in the early morning between the nighttime Mass at St. Mary Major and the daytime Mass at St. Peter's. The commemoration of St. Anastasia soon gave way to the celebration of the Nativity of the Lord.

The epistle for the Mass at Dawn was chosen because of its identification with the Byzantine feast of Epiphany: "... the kindness and love of God our savior for mankind were revealed" (Titus 3: 4-7). The gospel (Luke 2: 15-20), used in Bethlehem the day before Epiphany at the Place of the Shepherds was chosen for the Mass at Dawn. Both readings have been retained in the present lectionary.

**Guidelines for celebrating Christmas Masses**

Next to the celebration of the paschal mystery at the Easter Triduum, the Church holds most sacred the annual celebration of the birth of Christ. It is fitting that parish communities prepare well for this celebration. The following guidelines are offered to assist pastors and parish liturgical committees in their preparation of the Christmas Masses.

**Respect the Tradition and Liturgical Texts**

In the Roman Catholic tradition, the liturgical celebration of Christmas includes four distinct celebrations of the eucharist. The Vigil Mass of Christmas may be celebrated in the evening of December 24, either before or after evening prayer I. On Christmas itself, following the ancient tradition of Rome, three masses may be celebrated: namely, the Mass at Midnight, the Mass at Dawn, and the Mass During the Day.

Each celebration possesses a unique character which is defined by its proper texts and the time of day when it is to take place.

Whenever possible, the full cycle of Christmas Masses should be celebrated with their proper texts. Out of respect for the unique character of each celebration, the Masses are to be celebrated at their proper times.

**Provide a Welcome to All**

Christmas Masses attract large numbers of people from diverse backgrounds who bring with them a wide variety of faith experiences. Among those who celebrate with the Church at Christmas are faithful parishioners, their relatives and friends, those who are irregular in their participation in the liturgical life of the Church, and complete strangers. It is important that all are made to feel welcome so that as God's people, they will be united in
the prayer of the Church and give thanks and praise for the gift of salvation offered to them in Christ.

Select Appropriate Music

Music is an integral part of every liturgical celebration. Those who are responsible for selecting music for the eucharist should remember that the purpose of music in the liturgy is to support and enrich the liturgical texts and to accompany the actions of the community. Liturgical music also serves to foster the participation of all the members of the assembly who sing those parts of the Mass which properly belong to them.

When selecting music for Christmas Masses, priority is to be given to the singing of strong acclamations before the gospel and during the eucharistic prayer. These acclamations should be well known to the parish community. Hymns which are sung during Mass should also be well known and must be appropriate to the parts of the Mass during which they are sung.

Hymns and other forms of sacred music which are sung by the choir alone or by a soloist are best included before the liturgy begins.

Encourage Good Proclamation

When the scriptures are proclaimed during the eucharist, God reveals to his people the mystery of redemption. Christ is present and God's people are nourished. All are led in the Spirit to give thanks to God for the gift of salvation.

In general, out of respect for the unique character of each celebration, the particular readings assigned to each of the Christmas Masses are to be proclaimed. Since the scripture readings form the main part of the liturgy of the word, it is never permitted to replace them with non-biblical texts.

The readings for the Christmas Masses are very familiar to the people who gather each year to celebrate the Lord's birth. However, it is important that these readings be proclaimed with special care and with deep faith. Readers are encouraged to prepare the readings well. The use of two readers, one for each of the first two readings, the observance of a period of silence following each reading, and the singing of the responsorial psalm will contribute to the effective proclamation of God's saving deeds in Christ.

Christmas pageants and tableaux, even though they may be based on the scriptures, are not permitted during Mass. They belong outside the celebration of the eucharist.

Encourage Sound Preaching

In the homily, the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the eucharist are united to become a single proclamation of God's saving deeds in Jesus Christ. The purpose of the homily is to proclaim Christ's paschal mystery.

The homily should be the fruit of prayer, careful exegesis and preparation. It should be suited to the needs of all who participate in the liturgical celebration.
Homilies which focus exclusively on the historical events surrounding the birth of Jesus are inappropriate during the Masses of Christmas. Likewise, reflections that are trite or sentimental are to be avoided. While the homilist needs to be sensitive to the needs of particular groups within the assembly (e.g., young children, visitors and strangers) he must never depart from preaching to the entire community.

**Arrange for Ministers**

Whenever the Christian community gathers for the liturgy, a variety of ministers is required so that all may participate fully and actively in the celebration.

When additional Masses are needed, and where larger than usual crowds participate in the Christmas Masses, pastors and liturgical committees will have to arrange for and prepare additional ministers. Additional readers, musicians, special ministers of the eucharist, servers and ushers will likely be needed so that every celebration of the eucharist at Christmas is prayerful and a worthy expression of the Church's faith.

**Guidelines for scheduling Christmas Masses**

**Anticipated Masses**

It is permitted for the faithful to fulfill their obligation to participate in the Sunday Mass by their participation in the celebration of Mass on the preceding Saturday evening. The *Instruction on Worship of the Eucharist* clearly instructs pastors to “teach the faithful the meaning of this favor” and to “take steps to prevent its lessening in any way the sense of what Sunday is” (*Eucharisticum mysterium*, no. 28). This same Instruction notes that permission for anticipated Masses is a concession which is meant to enable the faithful in today's conditions to celebrate more easily the day of the Lord's resurrection. Finally, the Instruction leaves it to the local ordinary to determine the hours for anticipated Masses.

All of these points apply to the celebration of Mass that, for the same reason, is permitted on the evening before a holyday of obligation.

Normally only one anticipated Mass may be celebrated in a church, and this is permitted only for genuine pastoral need. It is never permitted simply for convenience.

**Additional Masses**

Where pastoral need exists, additional celebrations of the Vigil Mass may take place prior to the Midnight Mass, and additional celebrations of the Mass at Dawn or Mass During the Day may be scheduled for December 25. (Examples of need would be to provide Mass for a mission which is some distance from the parish church, or to alleviate overcrowding at the other Christmas Masses.)

The following questions will be helpful to pastors and liturgical committees when determining a schedule of additional Christmas Vigil Masses and/or Masses on Christmas Day.
1) Is there a genuine pastoral need for additional Masses in this parish, or are additional Masses being considered simply for convenience?

2) Will the multiplication of Vigil Masses diminish or obscure the importance of December 25 as the day on which the universal Church celebrates the Nativity of the Lord?

3) Can the needs of special groups (e.g., families with young children) be met more properly within a regularly scheduled Mass of Christmas Day?

4) Are there sufficient liturgical ministers available for additional Masses so that a worthy celebration can take place without undermining the quality of celebration during the Midnight Mass or the regularly scheduled Masses on Christmas Day?

5) Will the scheduling of additional Masses place an undue burden on the parish priest, or necessitate his celebrating more than three Masses on the feast of Christmas?

**Particular Diocesan Legislation**

Pastors and liturgical committees are to respect any diocesan legislation concerning the number of Masses or the hours for Christmas Masses which have been determined by the local Ordinary.

**When Christmas Is Celebrated on Saturday**

It is important to keep the celebration of Christmas and Sunday distinct, and to be mindful of the extra demands which are placed upon priests and other liturgical ministers when Christmas and Sunday are celebrated on consecutive days.

The following recommendations will be helpful.

1) If possible, additional celebrations of the Vigil Mass of Christmas are to be avoided.

2) If necessary, only one anticipated Midnight Mass should be celebrated around 10:00 p.m.

3) The regularly scheduled Saturday evening Mass in anticipation of Sunday should be omitted altogether.

**When Christmas Is Celebrated on Monday**

Sunday is the original and primary feast day for the Christian people, and the heart of the liturgical year. Christmas, the celebration of the incarnation of the Son of God and of his birth as our Savior, is a distinct feast. For this reason, the two celebrations should be kept distinct. It is therefore recommended that no Sunday Mass be celebrated on Sunday evening, in order to avoid any confusion between the two celebrations. If possible, additional Vigil Masses for Christmas should be avoided, and if necessary, only one anticipated Midnight Mass should be celebrated around 10:00 p.m.
In this issue of the National Bulletin on Liturgy you have heard the reflections of a number of people who have made significant contributions to the liturgical development since Vatican II. Many of these people have written for the National Bulletin over the years, so even if you have not seen their faces, you have heard their voices. We would now like to hear from you. We would like very much to hear your impressions of the National Bulletin on Liturgy and how it has contributed to your liturgical education. Thank you for taking the time to answer the following questions. Please return completed questionnaire to National Liturgy Office, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, ON K1N 7B1.

Who are you?
Pastor □ Pastoral Assistant □ Liturgy Committee Member □
□ Other (explain) ___________________________________________ 

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What do you see as the strengths of the Bulletin? ___________________________________________ 

Are there particular issues of the Bulletin which stand out in your mind as being the most helpful to you? If so, which ones are they and why are they the best? ___________________________________________ 

What type of articles would be helpful to you in your ministry? ___________________________________________ 

What suggestions would you like to make to improve the quality of this publication? ___________________________________________

Date __________________________ Signature __________________________
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