national bulletin on Liturgy

Full, Conscious and Active Participation
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, diocesan liturgical commissions, and for all who are involved in preparing, celebrating, and improving the community's life of worship and prayer.

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

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Full, Conscious and Active Participation
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Pope John Paul has asked the Church to give special attention to the celebration of the eucharist during the coming year, the Great Jubilee Year 2000. As an aid in this endeavour, this issue of the Bulletin focuses on paragraph 14 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.

The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people” is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.

In the reform and promotion of the liturgy, this full, conscious and active participation by 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 and therefore pastors must zealously strive in all their pastoral work to achieve such participation by means of the necessary instruction.

Thirty-six years after this compelling statement was first proclaimed to the Church, what is the state of our parish Sunday liturgy? To what extent are all the people in our Sunday assemblies participating in the celebration of the eucharist? At what points is participation lacking? Who is not participating fully? Why? What barriers remain? Where do we go from here? Writers from across the country grapple with these questions in this issue of the Bulletin.

It is not uncommon to run into individuals who question the validity of paragraph 14. Still others prefer to dilute its import or treat it like an impossible dream. Many have simply given up. To deal with these issues, Kim Wanner provides the groundwork on why the Council Fathers considered full participation in the liturgy so fundamental to Christian life. We also include the story of a parish who chose paragraph 14 as the focus of its jubilee project.

Because singing is intrinsic to our liturgy, music ministers can have a great effect on the community’s participation in the Sunday celebration. Bill Targett addresses parish music leaders on the topic of music ministry that promotes the full participation of the whole assembly. Also on the subject of music, Donna Kelly explains a method she developed, while working in
the diocese of Antigonish, for helping organists who do not use the foot pedals to move to "full" use of all the instrument has to offer, and to more effectively facilitate the community's sung praise.

Two topics concerning the participation of the ordained are addressed in this issue. Concelebration is a special form of participation by priests and bishops. What has our experience of the past thirty years taught us about concelebration? Deacons have a particular role in the community, both within and outside the liturgy. John Hibbard outlines the full liturgical role of the deacon and explains how this relates to his extra-liturgical ministry.

Several groups continue to experience barriers to full participation in the Sunday liturgy. We give particular attention in this issue to children (Catherine Ecker), the mentally disabled (Mary Hamilton and Coletta Dunn) and the Deaf (Peter Monty, Kevin Brockerville and Michael Gauthier).

To complete the topic, Bill Corcoran explains why catechumens cannot fully participate in the Sunday celebration in the way that the fully initiated do.

Included in the report from the National Office is an important document about Celiac disease and communion. Increasing numbers of people are being diagnosed with this illness. Many who have the disease are unnecessarily barred from full participation or are singled out due to the insensitive ways the situation is handled in some local parishes. It is hoped that this document will encourage communities to reach out to individuals with this disease and work out ways to open up eucharistic participation for them.

"Canadian Realities" makes another appearance in Bulletin #159. Reporting from the diocese of Antigonish, Bill Burke describes how St. Joseph's Parish, in Port Hawkesbury, NS, has dealt with the problem of scheduling the celebration of the Easter Vigil.

Book reviews are back! And this issue of the bulletin carries an important message about reconciliation from Abbot Peter Novecosky, a member of the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy.
A Brief History and Theology of Participation

Kim Wanner

Different Ecclesiologies, Different Liturgies

In the not so distant past most Catholics remembered what the liturgy was like before the Second Vatican Council. Some people would comment on fasting, following the mass in their missal, with Latin on one side of the page and English on the other, while listening to the choirs singing the mass parts in Latin. Some might remember people fingering their beads, silently waiting to look up when the bells rang at the consecration, and receiving communion on the tongue while kneeling at communion rails covered with white cloths. You could fulfill your Sunday obligation by arriving just before the offertory and leaving right after communion. If you asked how people participated in the life and prayer of the Church during this period, many would reply that their role was to help Father, and sometimes Sister, to do “their” work.

For people born after the Second Vatican Council or initiated into the Church through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, the experience of worship comes from the Church of Vatican II. This experience of participation is quite different from the experience of the first group. It flows out of an ecclesiology which speaks of the Church as a community of believers in which all the baptized are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people” (1 Peter 2.9; see 2.4-5) who have both a right and a responsibility to celebrate the liturgy of the Church with “full, conscious and active participation” (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy [CSL], 14).

This theology is in direct contrast to the vision of Church found in Pope Pius Xth’s encyclical Vehementer nos (February 11, 1906). Here the Church is described as:

... an unequal society, that is, a society comprising two categories of persons, the Pastors and the flock, those who occupy a rank in the different degrees of the hierarchy and the multitude of the faithful. So distinct are these categories that with the pastoral body only rests the necessary right and authority for promoting the end of the society and directing all its members towards that end; the one duty of the multitude is to allow themselves to be led, and, like a docile flock, to follow the Pastors.

When it comes to setting an agenda for pastoral liturgy in our parishes we are often caught between these two understandings and lived experiences of Church. The conciliar documents did not set out a detailed plan on how the theology of the renewed liturgy would be put into practice. Consequently, difficulties often arise in coming to some form of agreement on what this “participation” means in the life and worship of the parish community. This may be a frustrating and sometimes painful experience for those involved in trying to resolve these issues.

The Dance of the People of God

In an article called “Being Truly Catholic Today,” Archbishop Rembert Weakland speaks of “God’s people dancing in pilgrimage.” He says that

... each one of us must come to terms

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with living in a Church where the
dance of God happens among so many
human tunes that it is hard to see the
divine element dancing with us. 2

There have been many "human tunes"—
political, social, economic and religious—that have been played in the pilgrimage of
the Church throughout the centuries. Each
tune has had an impact on how people
worship their God.

Earliest Steps
In the early Church the only distinction for
laos or laity was between the elect, who
were God's people, and those who were
not. The whole community played an
active role in both Church administration
and ministry, along with a great diversity of
ministries both lay and ordained: bishops,
elders, presbyters, deacons, deaconesses,
readers, caretakers, singers, assisting minis-
ters, widows and so on. The periods follow-
ing Constantine's Edict of Toleration
in 313 AD and Theodosius' Edict of
Thessalonica in 380 AD, which made
Christianity the official religion of the
Roman Empire, touched and changed,
both positively and negatively, the life of
the Christian Church in its structure,
th­eology, ministry and worship.

Early Middle Ages
By the beginning of the middles ages, wars,
pov­erty, famine, plagues, violence, and the
shifting balance of power in the political
world affected Church structures and influ-
enced the repositioning of the laity to a
secondary role. The laity were mostly illit-
erate, and it was believed that since the
laity lived in the world and were involved
in war, violence, sexual relationships and so
on, they would always be sinners. The state
of holiness became associated with
religious life and an even wider gap developed
between the sacred and temporal orders.
This division is reflected in the worship of
the Church.

Ministries that originally belonged to the
laity were taken over by the clergy. The
continued use of Latin, now a foreign lan-
guage, the practice of the priest turning his
back to the people, the placement of archi-
tectural barriers and clerical ministers in
front of the assembly further limited the
participation of the laity in the eucharistic
action. By the 13th century, people no
longer received communion at every mass
and the sacrament of the eucharist suffered
to such an extent that the Fourth Lateran
Council (1215) mandated yearly
confes­sion and communion.

Reformation to the
Second Vatican Council
In the 14th century, the growth of cities
and access to education meant a more edu-
cated laity who began to question Church
practices and directions given by the hier-
archy. Corruption within the Church, lack
of insight into the spiritual needs of the
Christian people, the magical and supersti-
tious beliefs surrounding the sacraments,
and the sale of indulgences eventually led
to the reformation. In reaction to the
attacks of the Protestant reformers, the
Church put its efforts into solidifying its
understanding of itself as a "perfect" insti-
tution. The division between clergy and
laity was more firmly entrenched and our
relationship to God appeared to depend
more on obedience to the laws of the
Church than on its communal prayer and
worship. This vision of Church lasted until
the Second Vatican Council.

The Vision of the Council
The Primacy of the Assembly
The Council's reflection resulted in the
Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. This doc-
ument describes the liturgy as an indispens­
able medium by which "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). At the heart of
the liturgical renewal was the recovery of
the assembly as a primary symbol. The
assembly, which gathers Sunday after
Sunday, becomes the icon of God's rela-

relationship with humanity and the world. Through our participation in the liturgy we, the whole assembly, offer God thanks and praise for all the blessings that God has given us. We listen to God's word confronting us with our need for repentance, challenging us to enter more deeply into the paschal mystery of Christ's living, dying, rising and coming again in glory.

Ministry is not for a select few. The entire assembly ministers within the celebration. We should be aware of the dignity of each member of the assembly, creating a hospitable space where all are welcome to come and join, where strangers can meet without fear, and where, with Christ as our head, we can truly become "one body." Call on the gifts of all members of the community: male, female, young, old, married, single, those who can walk and those who cannot, those who can hear and those who cannot, those who can see and those who cannot, minority groups. Every person in the assembly is important. One cannot speak about full, conscious, and active participation when some members are excluded.

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy indicates the need for "the liturgical instruction of the faithful and also their active participation in the liturgy both internally and externally, taking into account their age and condition, their way of life, and their stage of religious development" (CSL, 19). The formation of the assembly depends on parish priests and other liturgical ministers who need to become "thoroughly imbued with the spirit and power of the liturgy and make themselves its teachers" (CSL, 14).

"Active" Participation
In our liturgical catechesis we have done reasonably well in looking after the dimension of external participation in worship but perhaps have neglected the need for internal participation. Participation does not necessarily mean praying and singing aloud at every possible moment. We are people who also pray in the silence of our hearts. We process, stand, kneel, embrace and lay on hands. We pause to listen to God's word, we feast our eyes on the colours of the season, the icons, vestments, flowers and the faces of God's people gathered around us. We smell incense and chrism, we taste the bread and wine. We should take care that the liturgy engages all our senses.

"Conscious" Participation
The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy speaks of the liturgy as "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). How well we participate often depends on how much our worship is worth to us. Many people in the world risk their lives in order to answer God's call to gather. Do we really believe that our participation in the liturgy has the power to transform our lives?

Does anyone have the foggiest idea what sort of power we so blithely invoke? Or, as I suspect, does no one believe a word of it? The churches are children playing on the floor with their chemistry sets, mixing up a batch of TNT to kill a Sunday morning. It is madness to wear ladies' straw hats and velvet hats to church; we should all be wearing crash helmets. Ushers should issue life preservers and signal flares; they should lash us to our pews. For the sleeping god may wake someday and take offense.

A Present and Active God
In our struggle to bring the assembly to the full, conscious, and active participation called for by the Council we sometimes lose track of the "divine dancing with us." Liturgy comes from two Greek words: logos (people) and ergon (work). Although we often speak of liturgy as the work of the people, the Greek translation means work having been done on behalf of the people. For example, in the Greek city state, the

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person who undertook to build the public sewers was a “liturgist” doing work on behalf of the people.

In Christian worship God is the “liturgist.” Liturgy is not so much about our concerns and us, rather it is opening ourselves up to listen to what God is asking of us not just as individuals but as a community. We do not come to liturgy empty-handed. We bring the experience of God’s presence in our daily lives since the last time we gathered. Through ritual and symbol we celebrate this presence, we listen and respond to God’s call. In the waters of baptism, in the telling of our story of salvation, in the breaking of the bread, the laying on of hands, the anointing with oil, we are transformed. We come to experience in a concrete and tangible way that we are members of the living body of Christ.

**Liturgy and Human Experience**

People have a difficult time participating in the liturgy if they lack identification with what is happening. John Gallen speaks of ritual as a way of spelling out in action an experience that is already present in a person’s life. In reaching back to this experience two things happen. First one gives expression to the heart of the experience and second in the very giving of the expression one intensifies or deepens the experience. We need to make better use of the boundary situations in people’s lives, the times of birth, marriage, illness, death to help them see how God is acting in their lives. These are key moments when we can help people bring their life experience, their joys and their struggles to worship. It is when our prayer and our lives go together, when we incarnate Christ in the world that the assembly becomes the primary symbol of the liturgy.

**Ritual is Repetition**

In our creativity we need to remember that change for the sake of change does not help the prayer of the people. Those who minister in the Church need to be careful not to take liberties with the liturgy based on personal preferences. Changing the words of the liturgical greetings, leaving out parts of the liturgy, i.e., the sign of peace, changing the order of the celebration, work against participation. Ritual is repetitive. If we are always wondering what is coming next, it can be difficult to pray. Ritual works best when we don’t have to think about it.

As long as you notice, and have to count the steps, you are not yet dancing but only learning to dance. A good shoe is a shoe you don’t notice. Good reading becomes possible when you need not consciously think about eyes, or light or print, or spelling. The perfect church service would be one we were almost unaware of; our attention would have been on God.4

**The Liturgy of the Church and the Liturgy of the World**

Participation in the liturgy of the Church should lead us to participation in the liturgy of the world. As part of the universal Church, each local Church must continue to work for justice and peace in their own neighbourhood as well as the whole of creation. Sent forth from the liturgical assembly we are called to work for the freedom of all of God’s children. Our “Amen” when we receive communion is not simply “Yes, I believe,” but “Yes, following the example of Christ, I offer my life to be broken and poured out for others.”

As we near a new millennium we need to ask ourselves how we can help to enable full, active, and conscious participation in the liturgy in a way that will enable the assembly to worship God and dance together. As the Church continues to dance through the ages on its pilgrimage to God, we pray the barriers that divide our assemblies will disappear. Then we will live in truth the vision we find throughout the writings of St. Paul: there is neither Gentile nor Jew, woman or man, servant or free, but all one body, proclaiming the death of the Lord until he comes again in glory. [1]

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Promoting Participation in the Parish Sunday Liturgy
A “Hands-on” Parish Formation Strategy

Beginnings
The liturgy committee at Sts. Martha and Mary Parish in Mississauga, Ontario, had for a long time sought a way to enhance the level and quality of people’s participation in the Sunday parish liturgy. In the spring of 1998, they heard that the Liturgy Education Committee (LEC) of the archdiocese of Toronto was willing to enter into a long-term partnership with a parish in order to accomplish that precise purpose. Together, they agreed that it would be appropriate to lay out a two-year plan that would culminate in a festive celebration on Pentecost of the year 2000. It would become the parish jubilee project, Liturgy 2000.

Within a few weeks, a gathering of parish leaders was held. The plan was presented to them to ensure a broad base of support, to gather their input, and to answer questions and concerns about how the project would unfold. Concerns centred on two main issues: how “good liturgy” would be defined, and whether the parish clergy would remain in place long enough to see the project to completion. Parishioners were assured that nothing outside the current liturgical documents would be imposed, and that options in the liturgical documents that best promoted full participation of the people would be pursued. The pastor stated his intention to do all he could to personally see the project through to completion.

The two committees agreed to follow a two-prong plan: parish-wide liturgical education and enhancement of the Sunday liturgy based on the results of a simple participation assessment conducted by members of the liturgy committee.¹ Early in the fall, one presentation was offered to parishioners on three separate occasions, in order to accommodate the various work and family situations. The presentation, entitled, “Discovering the Power of the Eucharist,” introduced the project to the parish-at-large, provided a basic liturgical theology of the Sunday celebration drawn from the liturgical texts themselves, and highlighted the crucial nature of the full, conscious and active participation of all the people. The presenter concluded by offering concrete suggestions as to how everyone can participate in hospitality, song, active listening, communal silence, the eucharistic prayer and the communion rite. Participants were asked to think of one way they each could increase their own participation in the Sunday celebration and were challenged to carry through on that idea at the Sunday mass in the coming months.

Assessing the State of the Liturgy
Meanwhile, the parish liturgy committee spent the weeks of early fall conducting the assessment. Committee members each attended a mass they usually do not attend, for four Sundays, and sat in various places they would not normally choose. Basically, they observed the extent of participation at various points during the liturgy, and looked for clues as to what was promoting or inhibiting participation.

At the end of the assessment period, results of these observations by the committee members were collated, discussed and summarized. Some of their observations simply confirmed their previous beliefs about what was happening at the Sunday

¹ See “Getting in Touch with the Assembly: Assessing Participation” on p. 204 of this issue of the Bulletin.
Promoting Participation in the Parish Sunday Liturgy • A Hands-On Strategy

coloration, but others were a surprise. Out of the discussion three specific goals were chosen for the first year: to establish a ministry of greeters, to buy CBW III in a great enough quantity to enable everyone to sing, and to investigate ways to improve the sound system.

Soon, subcommittees were formed to address the tasks of establishing a ministry of greeters and of purchasing new hymnals. The pastor called in a consultant to assess the acoustics of the building and to make suggestions for an improved sound system.

Parish education continued by means of monthly leaflets and shorter bulletin announcements as the occasion required. A project logo was designed to draw attention to materials dealing with the jubilee project.

A Hands-on Experience of Full, Conscious and Active Participation

Session One:
The Family of God Sings
During Lent of 1999, parishioners were invited to attend a series of evenings exploring different aspects of the Sunday liturgy. On the first evening, the Sunday celebration was presented as the joyful assembly of God's family around the table of the Lord, gathered by God to give thanks and praise for the paschal mystery in union with Christ, the risen Lord. People were encouraged to sit close to one another and to occupy the seats closest to the altar table. They were given time to simply turn and smile and greet those sitting nearby. They were encouraged to remove their coats and feel at ease in the pews that often confine movements, and they were challenged to turn and face the liturgical action wherever it may be, e.g. facing the centre aisle to sing and watch the processions. Participants were challenged to carry on these behaviours at Sunday mass and on subsequent evenings in the series.

The second half of the evening consisted of a sing-along in the parish hall, led by an experienced facilitator who energized the group and gave suggestions on how to sing at mass even when you don't know the song. In this less formal setting, using the parish's most popular, rhythmically strong hymns of praise, parishioners were able to experience for themselves the effect of being part of an assembly that was entering fully into the song. Some songs were so familiar that people enjoyed taking up the challenge of singing without looking at the book. The evening concluded back in the worship space with a brief prayer celebration including a scripture reading and enthusiastic singing. Music for the subsequent evenings was taken from the repertoire used on this evening.

Session Two:
The Great Story of the Family of God
On the second evening, the liturgy of the word was presented as a celebration of the great story of salvation. Participants were encouraged to prepare at home to hear the scriptures proclaimed on Sundays and to listen actively during liturgy. (Bookmarks telling how to use missalettes at home, rather than at mass, had been passed out when the missalettes were made available to parishioners at the beginning of Advent.) The assembly's role in the singing of the responsorial psalm and gospel acclamation was highlighted and practiced.

The second half of this evening consisted of storytelling and listening to stories — some personal (the story of my name or my baptism), some from books. Again we concluded with a celebration of well-proclaimed scripture and song in the church.

Session Three:
The Family of God at Table
On the third evening, the presentation focused on the table and the liturgy of the eucharist. In the introductory comments, it was pointed out that the shape of our church building has a direct effect on how the community gathers around the table of the eucharist and on how people understand what happens at the table. A brief history of the action of the assembly around the table was also given. The litur-
Promoting Participation in the Parish Sunday Liturgy • A Hands-On Strategy

Promoting Participation in the Parish Sunday Liturgy

Session Four: At Home in the Family of God
The fourth evening explored issues of hospitality. Special attention was given to the community’s response and responsibility to children in the Sunday assembly. Because much had already be done on the topic of liturgical hospitality during the establishment of the ministry of greeters, the presentation was shorter than on other evenings and the remainder of the evening was given over to a tour of the church building. The purpose of this tour was to familiarize people with the various places, objects and furnishings within the worship space and other parts of the buildings, and to help participants feel at home in the house of the Church.

Session Five: A Celebration of Eucharist
On the final evening, all the preceding explorations together with the group’s new celebration habits were brought to bear on a celebration of eucharist. Songs were chosen both for their appropriateness to the liturgy and for their proven popularity among the participants. The first reading and gospel passage for the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time Year C were used because these texts present rich images of a liturgical assembly. A procession, which brought the gospel book throughout the assembly, preceded the proclamation of the gospel.

The table was dressed following the general intercessions; everyone followed the gift bearers into sanctuary and stood surrounding the table for the liturgy of the eucharist; bread had been baked by one of the participants according to canonical regulations; the eucharistic prayer was sung; and everyone was invited to share in communion under both species. Although the parish had been offering communion under both kinds for some time, many said later that this evening was the first time they had received both the body and the blood of Christ at mass.

Results
To date the success of this project is difficult to determine. Certainly the liturgy committee now feels that its work is important to the life of the parish, and members are seeing some of the fruit of their labour. The brand new ministry of hospitality has a roster of ninety—a number which is most definitely needed, but was at first thought to be unrealistic given the community’s history of passivity to such projects. The hymnals have been purchased and the community is getting used to their new music resource. The sound system will require more time and some expense to fix, partly due to the architecture of the worship space.

A total of one hundred parishioners attended the introductory presentation in
the fall and attendance at the lenten series was consistently about eighty. Judging by the size of the parish we would have expected about two or three hundred participants. These numbers would be disappointing were it not for the fact that such numbers are unusually high for this rather passive community. But, the first year’s efforts have created a small but energetic core of people who see it as part of their ministry to the rest of the parish to be models of full, conscious and active participation — the leaven of the parish liturgy.

Year two of the project will see a focus on lectors (proclamation that engages the assembly) and ministers of music (leading so the people will sing); and the pastor has asked for some assistance with preaching. Work has already begun on Sunday etiquette — problems of coming late and leaving early.

For more information on this project contact the editor of the Bulletin.

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**Getting in Touch with the Assembly: Assessing Participation**

**Liturgy Education Committee (Toronto)**

There are many ways to “evaluate” parish liturgy. The perspective from which we view the liturgy will determine what we look for, who we watch and what action will follow the assessment. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy sets out full, conscious and active participation as the main goal of the Vatican II liturgical renewal. The Liturgy Education Committee of the archdiocese of Toronto designed the following participation-oriented assessment tool for Sts. Martha and Mary Parish. Notice that it generally looks at the assembly as a whole, rather than examining the rubrical correctness of specific ministers.1 It is reproduced in the Bulletin as an example, a starting point for getting in touch with the extent of participation in liturgy in your own parish.

**Introductory Rites**

1. Was an effort made to make everyone feel welcome as they arrived at church?

Hospitality was felt to be a participation issue because people will participate more readily if they feel welcome and at ease in their surroundings.

2. Were people generally on time?

This was felt to be a participation issue because people cannot participate in parts for which they are not present. Failure to arrive on time may also be an indicator that people do not feel that they themselves are an essential element in the celebration.

3. Was the hymn clearly announced?

This was measured as a possible barrier to participation: people cannot sing if they are not able to hear the hymn numbers when they are announced.

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4. Did you notice that people picked up hymnals and/or joined in singing the entrance song? This item established a measure of people's willingness to participate, and pointed at directions for future action. A failure by the people to make any attempt at finding a hymnal is a strong indicator that a lot of work is needed. If people look for but cannot find a hymnal, the problem is more easily solved by redistributing existing hymnals or by purchasing more. If people are holding a hymnal but not singing, the musicians need to do more work rehearsing the assembly and familiarizing people with the parish repertoire. If people are singing even without a hymnal, this is a strong indicator of a willingness to participate.

Liturgy of the Word
1. Did people generally look at the reader, read a missalette, or look elsewhere during the readings? This item measured the level of active listening during the liturgy of the word, but also surveyed how people understood participation in this part of the mass. For many Catholics, participation still consists in simply following a book. Reliance on missalettes and total inattention may also be the result of poor proclamation or a poor sound system.

2. Did people join in singing the psalm refrain and the gospel acclamation? This item was one of several included to determine whether singing was a problem overall or just at specific points during the mass. An isolated problem with one or both of these parts of the mass would lead a parish to examine how the assembly is being empowered to participate.

3. Did people generally appear to pay attention to the homily? No explanation warranted.

4. Did people join in the dialogue before the gospel, the Creed and the response to the general intercessions? These items, along with #3 below dealing with the Lord's Prayer, established a baseline for participation. A negative response here indicates a serious participation problem. In the case of Sts. Martha and Mary Parish, responses to this question pointed out a previously unnoticed problem with the design of the worship space. (Although participation in the Lord's Prayer was universally full at Sts. Martha and Mary, people sitting in certain well-delineated parts of the space were less likely to participate in these parts of the mass.)

Liturgy of the Eucharist
1. Did people generally pay attention to the eucharistic prayer? This question draws attention both to the people's understanding of the nature of the eucharistic prayer and to the quality of proclamation of the prayer by the priest.

2. Did people generally join in singing the acclamations during the eucharistic prayer? This question draws attention to the people's understanding of both the nature of the eucharistic prayer and their role in it. A negative response to this item might indicate the need for a better musical setting of the acclamations or a more concentrated effort at teaching them to the assembly.

3. Did people join in praying the Lord's Prayer? See #4 under “Liturgy of the Word,” above.

4. Were people singing the hymn during the communion procession? If not, did you observe why not? This was included because singing during the communion procession is problematic in many parishes, to the extent that many have given up even trying to get people to sing at communion time. When this item is taken together with a measure of participation in other sung parts of the mass, it can be determined whether singing overall is a problem or whether only specific sung parts need attention.

Concluding Rite
1. Did people generally remain until the dismissal was given? This item draws attention to exactly when people choose to leave, as well as to how much clutter may need to be trimmed from the concluding rite.

2. Did people generally join in singing the final song? See #4 under “Liturgy of the Eucharist,” above.
3. Was there a friendly feeling as people left or were they in a rush to get out?

This item is considered in conjunction with #1 under “Introductory Rites.” It may also indicate parking lot problems and/or problems brought on by scheduling masses too close together.

Summary

Taking the Vatican Council II’s direction of “full, conscious and active participation” as the norm, how would you assess this assembly’s participation?

This scale forces observers to take a stand. No fence-sitting is possible.

(poor) 1 2 3 4 5 6 (excellent)

Breaking Down Barriers, Building for Success: A Liturgical Audit

Liturgy Education Committee (Toronto)

The checklist which follows is designed to assist parish liturgy committees in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the Sunday liturgy as it unfolds in their individual communities. It is meant to be applied to all weekend liturgies which fulfill the Sunday obligation. Items are drawn from the following documents: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (CSL), General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM), Lectionary for Mass: Introduction (LFM), The Rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar, Music in Catholic Worship (MCW), Liturgical Music Today (LMT), Environment and Art in Catholic Worship (E&A), National Bulletin on Liturgy (NBL).

In some cases, the documents list options in addition to those in the checklist. Preferences expressed in the checklist are those which best promote the full, conscious and active participation of the entire assembly.

The audit is best carried out by several individuals observing at a number of liturgies over a period of a few weeks. Using this approach it is possible to obtain a more complete picture and to determine the general pattern of parish celebration, rather than relying on vague memories, personal impressions or one time flukes. Observers then present their findings to the liturgy committee, which prioritizes areas of need while drawing on and maximizing strengths.

A Worthy Place for Worship

1. The worship place is a unity which allows the entire assembly to be seated together and to be aware of a collective identity. E&A 11, 53
2. The space invites contemplation and is pervaded with a sense of the holy, a sense of mystery. E&A 12, 34
3. The building and its furnishings are made and maintained with obvious love and care; materials used are genuine and natural. E&A 20, 36, NBL #71 p. 203
4. The building can accommodate the needs of the handicapped. E&A 38, 39
5. The community’s concern for the needs of the world is apparent on bulletin boards and in space set aside for collection of food, money and other goods. E&A 38, 39
6. The lighting and the layout of seating allow members of the assembly to see each other and the focal points of the liturgical action. E&A 49, 50, 58
7. The natural acoustics of the space facilitate audibility of the assembly and of the ministers. An ample sound system augments where needed. E&A 51
8. Entrances lead to a common gathering space; if not, they are given equal attention by the ministers of hospitality. GIRM 68b, E&A 54
9. Presider and music ministers are clearly part of the assembly, yet are situated for effective exercise of their ministry. E&A 60, 69, 70, 83, MCW 38
10. There is only one altar; a solid, beautiful, nobly designed table; free, approachable from all angles. The Rite of Dedication of a Church and an Altar #7, GIRM 262, E&A 71, 72, 73
11. The lectern is reserved for scripture and preaching. Announcements and song leading are from another location. GIRM 272, LFM 33, E&A 74
12. The font is located to facilitate congregational participation in the Easter Vigil and allows immersion of infants, at least. E&A 76, 77
13. Consecrated bread is reserved in a place apart, specially designed for that purpose. There is only one tabernacle, placed in a wall niche, or on a pillar, not on an altar. A lamp burns nearby. GIRM 276, 277, E&A 78, 79, 80
14. Confessional space allows for reconciliation face-to-face or using a screen. E&A 81
15. Location of the sacristy promotes movement of procession through the assembly. E&A 82
16. The design, quality, number and harmony of vessels speak of the importance of the sacred action; likewise for the books used by the assembly and all ministers. E&A 84, 91, 96, 97
17. Major visual symbols (cross, images of saints, etc.) do not occur in multiples. E&A 85, 86, 87, 99
18. Furnishings and artifacts are in harmony with each other and with the architecture. E&A 67
19. Vestments invite attention by colour, design and enveloping form. Vesture of the altar, lectern, etc., does not hide or disguise the object. E&A 93, 94, 95
20. The whole space receives decoration, not just the altar area. E&A 102, 103
21. Audio-visuals, when used, do not disrupt the ritual action. E&A 25, 104, 105, 106
22. Paintings, sculptures, tapestries and other decor serve the liturgical action of the assembly, not the education of the assembly. They create an appropriate atmosphere. Flags, and other national and civil emblems, are not part of the normal setting. E&A 98, 99, 100, 101
23. With regard to purchases, renovations and maintenance, major liturgical symbols (altar, ambo, etc.) enjoy top priority in the dispersal of financial and human resources. E&A 13, 19, 20, 21, 30, 38

Those Who Lead Us in Liturgy
24. The various liturgical ministers, whatever their functions, take an active part in songs and acclamations throughout the entire celebration. CSL 14, GIRM 19, MCW 21, 22, LMT 63, 67
25. All liturgical ministers, including deacon, homilist, ministers of communion (clerical and lay), ushers, and choir take part in the entire celebration from entrance to recessional. GIRM 2, 3, 4, 42, 64, 127-141, 156, LFM 24

Introductory Rites
26. Ministers of hospitality greet arriving worshippers warmly and graciously. GIRM 68b, E&A 11, NBL #71, p. 206
27. The celebration begins on time. NBL #71, p. 207
28. The entrance procession and song effectively unite the assembly and lead all into the mystery being celebrated. Music is festive and familiar. GIRM 24, 25, 26, MCW 39-41, 61
29. The well-spaced procession moves through the assembly to the altar in a
dignified manner and pace. A reverent bow is made to the altar. (A genuflection is made only if the procession passes directly in front of the tabernacle.) GIRM 22, 27, 82-85, 162, 233, NBL #71, p. 207

30. Incense, cross, candles and lectionary (or book of the gospels) are highly visible in the procession. MCW 7, E&A 88, 89, 91

31. There is a meaningful pause for reflection at the beginning of the penitential rite. GIRM 23

32. The form of the penitential rite is varied on a regular basis. The rite of blessing and sprinkling of water is frequently used on suitable occasions. GIRM 313, MCW 44

33. When the third form of the rite is used, the invocations are phrased as acclamations of praise of the Lord, not as formulas of self-deprecation or apology. NBL #71, p. 210

34. The Glory to God is sung at least in festive times and seasons. GIRM 31, MCW 66

35. The priest's invitation, "Let us pray," is followed by a suitable period of silent prayer by everyone. GIRM 32, 88

36. The opening prayer itself is prayed in a proclamatory style, clearly summarizing and concluding the movement of the opening rites. GIRM 12, NBL #71, pp. 212, 213

The Liturgy of the Word
37. The assembly is allowed adequate time to settle before the liturgy of the word begins. NBL #71, p. 219

38. The quality of proclamation is such that it is clearly the voice of God speaking to this present assembly. GIRM 9, 33

39. The people listen attentively without need for missalettes, and they reflect in prayerful silence at the conclusion of the reading. GIRM 9, 23

40. The entire psalm is sung. A cantor sings the verses; the whole assembly sings the refrain. MCW 63

41. There is a different lector for each reading. GIRM 71

42. The gospel acclamation is sung by the entire assembly, and it accompanies a worthy procession. GIRM 37, 93-95, LFM 23, MCW 55

43. Latecomers are not admitted during the proclamation of the word. NBL #71, p. 223

44. A homily is always given. It is never pre-empted by special presentations. CSL 52, GIRM 42

45. The homily leads the assembly from a recognition of God's mighty acts in their midst to the celebration of praise and thanksgiving in the eucharistic prayer. CSL 35, GIRM 8, 9, 41, LFM 24

46. The general intercessions always address the great and current needs of the Church and the world beyond the gathered community. CSL 53, GIRM 45, 46

Liturgy of the Eucharist
Preparation Rites
47. Music avoids reference to 'offering' (which properly pertains to the eucharistic prayer). GIRM 49, 50, MCW 46, 47, 71

48. There is only one collection at any given celebration. GIRM 49, NBL #77, p. 32

49. There are sufficient ministers taking up the collection so that the offerings are collected in one movement from the front to the back. NBL #77, pp. 4, 5

50. A plate of bread and one flagon of wine are the only gifts carried in the procession. GIRM 293, NBL #77, p. 8

51. Sufficient bread and wine are brought forward for the communion of the entire assembly. GIRM 293, NBL #77, p. 8

52. An attempt is made to select bread for eucharist which has the appearance of real bread, and which can be broken for at least some of the communicants. GIRM 283

53. The wine is pleasant-tasting. GIRM 284, 285

54. Gift-bearers ensure that the bread and wine are highly visible throughout the procession. They carry the gifts all the
way to the altar table where they present them to the presider, rather than being met by him at an arbitrary, 'invisible barrier' which bars entry to the altar area.

55. Monetary donations, which are not eucharistic gifts, are stored in a secure place following the collection. If they must be brought forward at the same time as the gifts, they are not placed on or near the altar. GIRM 49

56. Music continues until the conclusion of the washing of the hands.

57. The priest waits until all are standing quietly before he begins to proclaim the prayer over the gifts. The prayer, by the manner of its proclamation, clearly summarizes and concludes the preparatory rites. GIRM 12, 53, NBL #77, p. 10

Eucharistic Prayer

58. The eucharistic prayer is proclaimed in such a manner that it is clearly the prayer of the entire assembly. It is marked as the great prayer of the liturgy, and is celebrated with genuine thanksgiving. GIRM 10, 54

59. The eucharistic acclamations (Holy, Holy, memorial Acclamation, great Amen) are sung boldly. The musical settings contribute to the inherent unity of the eucharistic prayer. GIRM 15, MCW 53, LMT 15, 17

60. A variety of eucharistic prayers is used in the course of the Church year. GIRM 322

Communion Rite

61. The greeting of peace is exchanged as a genuine sign of Christian love. GIRM 56b, 113, NBL #77, pp. 24, 25

62. There is no music during the greeting of peace. NBL #77, p. 26

63. The breaking of the bread is carried out in such a way that it stands out as a significant action within the communion rite. It is accompanied by the singing of the Lamb of God litany. GIRM 56, 113, LMT 20, NBL #77, pp. 29, 30

64. Additional empty vessels are not brought to the altar table until the breaking of the bread. E&A 96

65. Communion is given exclusively from hosts consecrated at this eucharist. CSL 55, GIRM 56, 240, 242

66. The people share in communion from the chalice whenever permitted. GIRM 117, 244

67. Everyone receives communion (bread and cup) from a minister; there is no self-serve communion.

68. Ministers of communion strive to make each individual's communion a genuine encounter with the Lord. CSL 8, 47, MCW 48

69. Ministers of hospitality facilitate (as may be required), rather than marshal, the communion procession. GIRM 68, NBL #77 p. 31

70. The communion songs are selected so that they can be sung by the assembly in procession. Everyone does join in. MCW 62

71. Purifications take place after communion at a side table, or after mass. GIRM 238

72. The prayer after communion is clearly linked to the communion rite. It is not preceded by parish announcements. GIRM 56, NBL #77 p. 32

73. Parish announcements, if required, are brief. They are made between the prayer after communion and the blessing, or before mass begins. NBL #77, p. 32

Concluding Rite

74. The solemn form of the blessing is sometimes used. GIRM 57, NBL #77, pp. 34, 35

75. The dismissal is crisp and strong. NBL #77, p. 35

76. Ministers leave their seats only after the dismissal has been given.

77. The procession leaves as soon as the music begins.

78. The closing hymn, when used, is selected such that it accompanies the procession and naturally concludes when the procession is finished.
Music to Support Participation
Leading So the People Will Sing

Bill Targett

To Sing or Not to Sing
I recently attended mass at a large urban church. Sitting in a pew near the front, I noticed that many in the large gathering seemed to know each other. A voice suddenly boomed at us, “Please stand and sing hymn number 426.” A thousand people stood. A large pipe organ played the introduction. The cantor sang the hymn by herself.

As director of music in a large suburban parish outside Toronto, I lead a 60-voice SATB choir every Sunday. Each week I spend several hours selecting music for the Sunday eucharist, most of which is music involving the assembly. I check the text, review the melody, watch for awkward words or intervals, sing it through at a variety of tempos. At choir practice, I take the choir through each and every piece of music. When we arrive in the church on Sunday morning, we are prepared!

As a visitor to that other city parish, I certainly intended to sing and actually began to do so. However, before the first verse ended, I admit to having given up and joined the assembly in silence. The experience allowed me a chance to think about the whole idea of asking, inviting, and expecting the assembly to sing.

Singing Ourselves Together
Just what are we doing with the “opening” hymn? On any Sunday morning, people all over the parish struggle out of bed, planning on going to mass. Hunger, lack of sleep, uncooperative children, cars with no gas, missing pets, and hung-over heads often conspire to thwart those plans. However, hundreds of people actually make it out the door and head off for the church. As they stream in, usually at the last second or later, I realize that there are some good people among them. Most, I suspect, are weary sinners, not perfectly clear on why they have come back to this table for yet another Sunday. Tired, confused, over-burdened with responsibilities, I believe they have heard God’s call to gather. Most people in the town either don’t choose to listen to the call or decide that answering it will serve no purpose. But this little group filling the church reminds me that I am not alone on the journey through life. As they stream in from their homes, it is my task to facilitate music. So the first hymn signals the closing off of the gathering of the people from the far reaches of the parish. The people of the journey from slavery into freedom, from selfishness into self-giving, have assembled to give praise.

Respecting the Hymn
The musical leadership needs to respect the hymn, wherever a hymn is sung during the mass, by singing the complete text. There is never a reason to stop the opening hymn, or any hymn, before the end of the text. It is not being sung as walking music to get Father to the front.

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Respect the people who are still gathering. Allow the hymn to go on so that they have a chance to get in place; and rid yourself of judgments about why they couldn't get here on time. When ended, this hymn should leave us truly ready to "celebrate these sacred mysteries."

Unless we image the gathering this way, I believe that we become "task doers" only, creating musical moments that enable us to avoid silence. Musicians are called to artistry, to help create the vision. This is one reason for the Church's insistence on live music over recorded.

Respecting the Assembly
What a privilege for those of us charged with selecting the music! I am aware of attitudes other than privilege that I often encounter. For example:
- "they're only coming because they feel it would be a sin to miss mass," or
- "they're all just a bunch of hypocrites, lying and cheating all week but looking holy on Sunday," or
- "their parents made them come," or
- "they're only here to attend mass, not to take part,"
and so on and so on.

The leader of song can stand before the community with an attitude of privilege or one of these other attitudes but the assembly will soon sense where we are coming from. I believe this is the first key to the success or failure of congregational singing: we respect the assembly and they trust us, or we have other views of the people and they choose not to co-operate with us.

To return to my experience in that large church, there was no sense that I was actually invited to sing. The cantor's voice was so loudly amplified that the addition of several hundred untrained voices would have added nothing to her excellent singing. The tempo set by the organ ignored our inability to breathe through the slow and long phrases, again telling us that our singing was not really essential. As the cantor stared over our heads into the choir loft, and as the presider and others came down the aisle with no hymnals in hand, the message was clear to all that had gathered: a few persons have been appointed to certain roles, and your role, dear people, is simply to be present; participation is optional.

Attitude matters in every simple action. Announcing the hymn numbers is not just a matter of saying the correct words. When we announce, it is important to repeat the number several times so that those who are talking, or praying, or hard of hearing, or half-asleep realize that we want them to sing, too. If there is more than one hymnal, be sure everyone knows which book to use. It's a matter of respect for the assembly.

Assume Nothing
Assume nothing. Repeat hymn tunes a lot! You and I may rehearse them all week long but for the people in the pews, this may be the first time they have ever heard this hymn. Sing the hymn three or four weeks in a row, moving it around in the liturgy but be sure that the people have a real chance to learn the melody. After a few weeks of rest, bring it back again.

Congregations need a strong but limited repertoire that they are comfortable with. This means around 100 hymns and 2, 3, or maybe 4 sets of acclamations. Aim for this. Use this as a planning principle rather than simply searching out hymns that are appropriate to the readings of the day. Have a year-long plan for learning and for retaining hymns.

Be sure that people know we really want and need them to sing with us. Tell them so! Remind them that if God gave them a great voice, this is the chance to offer it back as gift and if God gave them a foghorn, this is their chance to get even! A little bit of humour and a sincere invitation will go a long way.

Catholics Can Sing
Trust the people. Except for the announcement of needed information, I can see no real need for using a microphone. It clearly tells people that this amplified voice is intended to be listened to. Some people...
think it helps the assembly to sing the melody but that is the role of an instrument, not the role of a miked voice. When the cantor sings into a mike, the whole space is filled with sound, and the members of the assembly sense that their little voice would really add nothing.

Know the strengths and the limitations of your instrument(s) and the one playing it. Use the instrumentation that can best support and lead the particular piece of music whether you are a fan of that instrument or not. The tune "St. Anne" is not well served by guitar and the Haas’ “Blest Are They” works better with piano and guitar than it ever can on the organ.

At a Saturday afternoon mass recently, I was the organist and no cantor arrived. I announced that we were on our own and asked that people please sing with me while I played the organ. The singing was at least as strong as ever and there was no amplified voice. When the role is clearly given to them, the people will gladly raise their voices. The task of musical leadership must be to support the assembly not to impose on them the personal tastes, preferences, and abilities of the musicians.

**Putting Words in the Assembly’s Mouth**

You and I need to pay close attention to the words we put into peoples’ mouths. Many years ago, I remember one text I was invited to sing. It contained the line “Jesus is the jingle in the pocket of my life.” Fortunately, nothing else of that song remains with me. Contrast that with this text from CBW III #361 by James Quinn:

Great God of mercy,
God of consolation,
Look on your people,
gathered here to praise you:
Pity our weakness,
Come in pow’r to aid us,
Source of all blessing.¹

Do we consider issues of justice when we look at texts or do we leave these debates to the social justice people? Do we sing the text of “Faith of Our Fathers” found at CBW III #446, and always avoid the text at #447? The latter text will tell people something about you, something of your care for all people in the community. It will tell them that you choose texts that need to be prayed not just texts that avoid negative comments from a few. It says that hymns are not just decorations, or musical interludes, rather they are powerful messages carried on music. People need a reason to sing and we need to search for texts that connect to peoples’ lives, texts and tunes that cause their hearts to be moved.

**Ministerial Presence**

There are many ingredients that contribute to a singing assembly. Why should the whole assembly sing? Occasionally, take a moment to introduce yourself. I have been at the same mass 48 Sundays of every year for over 18 years. I do not assume that the people know my name. Make yourself visible before mass begins.

Be available, smile, and greet people. If you are there with family, have them nearby. Let people see that you have kids, or a squirming baby, or a head-shaven teen.

We have all been called and we are all here because we hunger for the food at this table. Be a model of that hunger and need. Be attentive, prayerful, prepared, and calm.

Remind people that their voice does make a difference, it just won’t be that same if one single person is not singing. However, if you don’t believe this, please do not say it, because they will know you do not really mean it. Do not become just one more person who says what they do not believe.

Rather, work to trust the people, respect their presence, encourage their participation, and rejoice in the song.

¹ Text of “Great God of Mercy” from the Resource Collection of Hymns and Service Music for the Liturgy © 1981, International Committee on English in the Liturgy, Inc. All rights reserved.
Removing Barriers

What if they still don't sing? There are no secret formulas for getting the participation of people, many of whom grew up trained to be silent at mass. Some people will not sing because they rightfully recognize that the hymn-text may be sentimental garbage, expressing pleasant thoughts and feelings that they do not share. Others find the tunes we select insipid, lame, and juvenile. They may feel insulted that we would put such mediocre music before them. Some don't speak the language, while others simply cannot read.

But there is another area where we must look if we are really interested in enabling a singing assembly and that is at our own musical skills. Consider the tempo. Often, songs work best when sung by one person alone. However, if this song is put before a congregation but led by what is essentially a soloist, the tempo may discourage people who never get to sing anywhere except in church. In my experience, a strong, brisk tempo almost always works while a slow, plodding, “reflective” tempo almost always discourages non-singers.

Accompaniment as a Pastoral Skill

How do I accompany? A few years ago, there were heated battles about the instrument that would be used in Catholic worship. You were either part of the guitar camp or the organ camp. Those battles did nothing to further the cause of encouraging the people to sing though they certainly served to divide communities. Whatever the instrument, it needs to be played well. An organist who can't use the pedals is about as effective as a guitarist who knows only four chords. Find the best, most effective instrumentalists your parish has and facilitate their being part of the music ministry. If they can play better than you, then move over! Pastoral music is a craft before it is an art and every craft has skills associated with it that can and must be learned.

Accompaniment is learned mostly from experience over many years. Not every skilled keyboard player or guitarist makes a good accompanist. Go to other churches of whatever denomination and hear quality accompaniments. Only when the skills of the craft are in place, can the music begin to become art. Never blame the people for not singing when the reason may be that the accompanist discourages singing.

Leading the Assembly's Song

How is a singing assembly improved by having a person standing at the front singing at them during the liturgy? What is the purpose other than to be seen? We think we are helping; we are afraid they won’t sing if we are not standing there belting it out. Give it up. Stand with the people and sing out. Model what a member of the assembly does so that they will come to know that the assembly is the primary ministry. The minister of music should not be set apart from the assembly. We look back to the fifties and sixties and criticize the choirs in lofts behind the people. In some churches, we continue to set the musicians apart, now at the front of the church, now a visual focal point and distraction. If you need a stage from which to perform, check out the local bars.

Priests as Ministers of Music

Need it be said that the leadership of the clergy also makes a difference? If the priest will not carry a hymnal, will not sing, will not stay put for even part of the recessional hymn, will not allow the gathering hymn to be sung in its entirety, then all our efforts will have little effect. Where this is the case, do not be discouraged, because music by itself is not responsible for carrying the whole weight of the assembly’s gathering experience. Pastoral leadership, effective proclamation of the word, powerful symbols—all these need to be in place as well as strong music. When they all come together, the task of transforming lives has a chance.
From Keyboard to Organ: The Antigonish Method

Donna Kelly

The following article provides background material on a program for training Church organists that was developed in the diocese of Antigonish, Nova Scotia. It explains the inspiration for the program's creation as well as an outline of its methodology. It also highlights some indirect spinoffs from such a program.

I learned to play the organ when I was in university and majoring in clarinet. I had been playing the organ in church for about six years, but had never been taught to play the organ correctly — that is, complete with pedals and a full understanding of the concept of organ technique. I was quite fascinated with the pedals, but my earliest music teachers did not think that learning to play pedals was a necessary technique for organ. When I finally began to study organ seriously I could not believe the world of music that was opened up to me. I enjoyed the experience so much that I could not believe the world of music that was opened up to me. I enjoyed the experience so much that I continued to study organ as a second instrument during my remaining years in university. After finishing university and having taught music for several years, I took a year's leave of absence and spent a year in Vienna, Austria, studying organ. I had no aspirations of becoming a concert organist, but rather wanted to become a more proficient organist so I could serve parishes better.

In 1986 I became director of music and liturgy for the diocese of Antigonish, Nova Scotia, and my days of regular parish organ playing were put on hold. I spent my days and weekends travelling to the over one hundred parishes of the diocese putting on workshops and helping the various ministry groups (musicians included) to understand their role and contribution to the liturgy and prayer of the entire assembly. In the course of my travels, I became aware of the fact that organists (those who knew how to play pedals) were in short supply. Most of the people who were playing the organ in parishes were pianists who were offering their musical talent for the praise of God, but had little understanding of the workings of the organ; most never attempted the pedals. Many of the rural parishes simply had small electronic organs with only an octave pedal board and some had even converted to electric pianos. Even the best musicians in the diocese had limited knowledge of how to use the organ proficiently.

Finally I decided that something had to be done in order to fill this need in the diocese. I had taught piano and other instruments privately, but had never attempted to teach organ. The first summer, I introduced a two-week session (three hours a day every second day) for people who wanted to learn organ. On the off-days the students were expected to practice what had been taught and to come to the next lesson prepared to play selections. A pipe organ was found in the city of Sydney, Nova Scotia. The course was organized as group lessons modelled on organ master classes. The individuals who signed up for this session ranged in age from teens to older adults. The skills varied; however, they were required to have a basic knowl-

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edge of music, reading both treble and bass clef. Some were already organists in parishes; others were interested in learning in order that someday they might be able to play in church. I thought that it would be a simple matter of teaching them to play the bass line of a four-part hymn accompaniment with their two feet. I learned more that year than I taught.

Fortunately, this first year, I was able to locate an excellent organ method book to use — *Little Organ Book for Beginners in Organ Playing* by Flor Peeters (published by Summy-Birchard Inc.). The biggest challenge encountered this first year was how to deal with hymn playing. Most of the accompaniments in the *Catholic Book of Worship* were too difficult for the majority of people, even when playing hands alone, much less adding the two feet.

The Flor Peeters book is well organized and sets forth the basic techniques necessary for organ playing, especially solo organ pieces. In order to cover the various skills required of organ playing, it is necessary to move around the book according to the following outline:

The Foreword of the book gives an explanation of the workings and registration of pipe organs.

The first part of the book (Elementary Exercises p.1ff.) deals with techniques for the hands (attack, legato, crossing of the thumb, finger-crossing, substitution and glissando fingering) which are different from piano technique. (I usually assign one page of this section at the first lesson.)

The second section (p. 7ff.) deals with independence of voices by using choral tunes for two-part manual playing. I usually assign one of these pieces at the first lesson. These pieces can be used by the musicians as solos at the preparation of the gifts in the liturgy or for quiet meditative music as the assembly gathers.

Then proceed to section four (p. 18ff.) which introduces the pedals. Pedalling can be introduced easily at the first lesson. The first thing that is introduced is the use of the toe-toe technique. The students learn to read the bass clef, interpret the symbols for left and right foot and play the notes as written. Several exercises can be assigned, or maybe a page, depending on the ability of the student.

Finally, proceed to section six, which deals with the toe-heel technique (p. 43ff.) and review several exercises to develop this skill. This is more difficult and may require a slower pace; however, it is amazing how quickly students are able to learn this skill.

The above are the basic skills covered in the first lesson, proceeding progressively through each of these sections of the book at the students own pace. Other skills taken up as the student progresses are introduced in the following sequence:

- section seven: two-part manual and pedal playing (p. 50);
- section five: three-part manual (p. 25);
- section eight: three-part manual and pedal (p. 56);
- section nine: four-part manual (p. 82);
- and finally section ten: four-part manual and pedal (p. 88).

In the second year, the format of the lessons was changed. Instead of having all the students together for three hours, each student had half-hour private lessons. This allowed each student to move at their own pace and not feel so self-conscious playing in front of the other students. It was in this second year that progress was made on my part in understanding the technique of teaching students to play hymn accompaniments. Although the starting point is slightly unconventional it is one that works and it allows the students to become functional church organists in a short amount of time.

Students learn to play accompaniments from a guitar score. Hymns in the *Glory and Praise* books are available with melody and guitar chord names. The first hymn learned is "Abba Father" because it uses only two chords — D and G. The students learn to play the melody in the right hand, the chords in the left hand and the root of the chord in the pedals. The only other skills
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necessary for this type of accompaniment is naming of notes which make up chords and the playing of chords in the various inversions to facilitate smooth left-hand chord progressions. This allows the student to play a hymn using hands and feet at the first lesson. A number of students with whom I worked already knew how to play chords because they accompanied Scottish fiddlers in Cape Breton, but they refined this skill. Since these students learned this technique on piano, they always played chords in root position; playing inverted chords was new. Familiarity with chords is vitally important for any serious piano or music student in the study of music theory, so the skill is transferable. Other pieces of music that help to develop this skill are: "Peace is Flowing Like a River," "Isaiah 49," "Prayer of St. Francis," etc. With time this skill is refined to the extent that students are able to play for celebrations of eucharist in their parish.

Playing hymns simply using chords does not make for a proficient organist and is not the goal of the program. This basic skill allows students to play accompaniments with hands and pedals and gives them an opportunity to begin using their newly acquired skill by doing some limited accompanying at church. The next step, however, is to proceed with playing four-part hymn accompaniments as written — three voices in the manuals and the bass line in the pedal. To develop this technique, however, some simplification is needed. The hymn accompaniments in the Catholic Book of Worship are too difficult for beginner and intermediate level organ students. Most of these accompaniments need to be simplified somewhat if students are going to learn to play hands and feet together. For this task, I solicited the assistance of a sister in my community. A retired music teacher herself, Sr. Mary Kennedy, cnd, was keenly aware of the
challenge and was willing to assist by taking some of the well-known hymns in the Catholic Book of Worship and simplifying the four-part arrangement of these hymns. To date about 15 hymns have been completed and these are the ones that are used to set students on the road to learning the technique of playing hymns properly on the organ.

Eventually centres in various locations throughout the diocese were set up with the same kind of program. This was to accommodate students who lived in the rural areas. Pipe organs were used for all lessons, sometimes in United or Anglican churches.

After several years, it became evident that two-week sessions in the summer were not sufficient to allow the students to progress well in their skills, so lessons were provided throughout the year once a month. The summer weeks continued to be an intensive time. This provided more continuity and the students progressed at a more rapid pace. It also provided an opportunity to deal with difficulties that the students might encounter as they began to use their new skills in their parish communities. It was most rewarding to watch students grow in their confidence and in their ability to lead parish choirs and parish assemblies in God's praise at eucharist.

The organ-training program in the diocese of Antigonish was started in the summer of 1988 and continues today. Presently the teacher is Susan Monk, an accomplished piano teacher, pianist and organist. Susan provides organ lessons during the summer and also during the year and the diocese continues to fund the program.

In addition to an increase in parish organists, there has been a raised awareness, at the parish level, of the need for quality instruments for the organists to play. In the past several years quite a few parishes have purchased new organs and have opted for good electronic organs with a full pedal board. It would be great if pipe organs were in all churches, but since the majority of parishes in the diocese are small rural parishes, a decent electronic organ is a major improvement over what they have been using — namely the small entertainment style organs which are available with an octave pedal board. These newer quality instruments have enhanced the congregational singing in these parishes. A quality organ supports the assembly's song in a manner superior to other instruments.

The number of young people playing the organ in parishes of the diocese has been steadily increasing over the years. When I was in the diocese and working directly with this program, it was exciting to watch their enthusiasm for liturgical music and organ grow. It was also inspiring to watch musicians who had been playing the organ in their parishes grow in self-confidence in their ministry.

Large cities and dioceses may not face the same difficulty of training organists that was encountered in the diocese of Antigonish. Even in larger cities, however, church music leaders need to take a more active role in the formation of future organists. Diocesan liturgy commissions might meet with local private music teachers to look at the possibility of setting up a training program for church organists. Dioceses can support future organists by partially or fully funding such a training program.

As a person who fell in love with organ when I began studying with Carol Gitley and Melvin and Margaret Dickinson in Louisville, Kentucky, over thirty years ago, I believe that the skill of organ playing is something which needs to be passed on to the church musicians of tomorrow. They are the ones who are studying piano TODAY.

Participation and the Ordained
Some Reflections on Concelebration

The rite of concelebration was officially introduced at the Mass of the Lord’s Supper on April 15, 1965. From the outset it was well received, although there have always been misgivings about improper use and application. Today, with several decades of experience behind us, we are in a rather good position to evaluate the impact of the rite.

The Eucharist: Sacrament of Unity

It belongs to the nature of the eucharist to express the unity of the Church. Thus the bishops of the Second Vatican Council, after describing the day of Pentecost, go on to say, “From that time onward the Church has never failed to come together to celebrate the paschal mystery.”

Further on, they provide a basic norm: “Whenever rites, according to their specific nature, make provision for communal celebration involving the presence and active participation of the faithful, it is to be stressed that this way of celebrating them is to be preferred, as far as possible, to a celebration that is individual and, so to speak, private. This applies with special force to the celebration of Mass and the administration of the sacraments, even though every Mass has of itself a public and social character.”

Problems with the Sacramental Sign

The initial impetus for a rite of concelebration came from a felt need to shore up the image of the eucharist as the sacrament of unity and apply the basic norm of a communal celebration in the face of the individual celebrations of presbyters who, to use the language of the day, wanted or felt required to say their own mass. The conflict regarding the sacramental sign was particularly striking on the occasion of presbyteral retreats, when it was customary to set up rows of portable altars at which the presbyters took turns saying mass.

This practice had a fairly long history. Yet it could not be argued successfully that, on a simple arithmetic scale, two masses were better than one. On the other hand, it was patently clear that the sacramental sign of unity was more perfectly revealed when the entire community joined in a single celebration. Concelebration addressed this kind of problem. And this is probably the principal reason why co-consecration (saying the words of institution) was built into the new rite. (In the more ancient practice, only the presiding bishop prayed the eucharistic prayer.)

In view of all of this, one must admit that the rite of concelebration was intended to meet a specifically clerical need. Nevertheless, its overarching purpose was to ensure the integrity of the eucharist as the sacrament of the unity of the Church.

Concelebration, But Not Always Concelebration

Concelebration, however, is not the only option available in the post-Vatican II Church. The presbyter who forgoes his individual mass does not need to concelebrate; he may simply join the rest of the community in the parish celebration.

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1 Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (CSL), no. 6 (emphasis added).
2 CSL, no. 27.

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reason why this is appropriate requires some elaboration.

The principal point is that the presbyter who, without concelebrating, simply becomes part of the assembly genuinely celebrates the eucharist: “It is the whole community, the Body of Christ united with its Head, that celebrates. ‘Liturgical services are not private functions but are celebrations of the Church which is the sacrament of unity,’ namely the holy people, united and organized under the authority of the bishops.”

It is perhaps important to note that this language, while rich and provocative, is not at all new. Joseph Jungmann has pointed out that even into the late Middle Ages the principle of concelebration was understood in terms of all the assembled people: “This principle [of concelebration] implies, for all the participants, a proper share in the community service, but not necessarily a co-consecration on the part of the priests present.” As a vestige of this practice, Jungmann cites the Mass of the Lord’s Supper prior to Vatican II and the new rite of concelebration, where all the clergy would participate informally in the one public celebration.

Looming in the background (or perhaps the foreground), of course, lies the question of presbyteral co-consecration. Here it is useful to keep in mind that no matter how many presbyters might recite the words of consecration there is only one eucharist being celebrated. Nothing, therefore, is lost, and sometimes much may be gained, when the presbyter celebrates informally in the assembly.

**Privileged Occasions**

The eucharist is an act of self-expression on the part of the Church. Thus, when we attempt to determine the appropriateness of concelebration on a particular occasion, the basic question bears upon the quality of the sacramental sign, and not upon the personal preference or inclination of individual presbyters. The question is straightforward: Will concelebration in this instance strengthen and enhance the liturgical sign? For example, if the number of concelebrants is so large that it creates an imbalance in the overall shape of the assembly, then the eucharistic self-expression of the Church will to some degree be distorted and impaired.

Keeping the self-expression of the Church in mind, there are certain privileged occasions when concelebration is especially proper. Any presbyters who are present should concelebrate at any eucharist at which the diocesan bishop presides, at the ordination of a bishop or presbyter, and at the Chrism Mass. All parish clergy should concelebrate at the Mass of the Lord’s Supper and the Easter Vigil. All bishops should concelebrate at the ordination of a bishop. It is appropriate for diocesan bishops to invite visiting bishops to concelebrate at the cathedral mass.

**Other Appropriate Occasions**

There are also many other occasions when concelebration is particularly appropriate. All parish clergy should concelebrate during the pastoral visit of the bishop, at the parish celebration of confirmation, the anniversary of the dedication of the church. It would also be appropriate for parish clergy to concelebrate at the parish weekday eucharist when there are more presbyters than there are scheduled celebrations as well as at the funeral liturgy of parishioners. (In this last case, and from a pastoral perspective only, concelebration should not take place if it is viewed as a way of giving special honour to the person being buried.)

There are some particular occasions that also may be noted: episcopal and presbyteral assemblies, retreats and days of recollection; the eucharist celebrated in seminaries

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4 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1140.
and in communities of presbyters; and the funeral liturgy of bishops and presbyters.

By Way of Conclusion
The eucharist is a revelation of the unity of the Church. Thus it is in every way appropriate for presbyters to set aside their individual celebrations and join the public assembly. Two options operate within this communal celebration: concelebration and informal celebration with the rest of the people of God. On some occasions concelebration will be very appropriate; at other times it will not be so. The frame of reference is honouring the integrity of the eucharist as the self-expression of the Church.

Celebrated well and at appropriate times, the rite of concelebration can make a significant contribution to the eucharistic life of the Church. But much depends on our frame of mind, and in this time of transition we would do well to keep Aidan Kavanagh’s pithy comment in mind: “Concelebration is not an opportunity for presbyters to get in ‘their mass’. It is not a clerical convenience, but an event to be used with appropriate discretion and in due scale so as to heighten the assembly’s festive expression of its fundamental nature as the table fellowship with God in Christ.”

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The Role of the Deacon at the Eucharist

John Hibbard

The Role of the Deacon in the Life of the Church
Recently the Vatican Congregations for the Clergy and for Catholic Education (February 22, 1998) issued two related documents on the formation and ministry of deacons. The joint introduction states that the permanent diaconate has experienced growth throughout the world, which now gives rise to the need for “a certain unity of direction and clarification of concepts as well as for practical encouragement and more clearly defined pastoral objectives.” The present article briefly looks at the liturgical role of the deacon spelled out in a general way in the “Directory for the Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons,” issued by the Congregation for the Clergy, and in a particular way in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal.

Servant
The Second Vatican Council summarized the deacon’s ministry as a threefold service, or diakonia, of the word, the liturgy and

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charitable works, (see Lumen Gentium, 29). The work of charity clearly stands out in chapter six of the Acts of the Apostles when seven men of good reputation were chosen to carry out the work of providing for the widows of the Greek-speaking members of the Christian community. These men are brought to the apostles for the laying on of hands. Later in the Acts we see some of these men engaged in the proclamation of the word. The ministry of the deacon shows the intimate connection between life and proclamation and liturgy.

**Ordained Minister**

The liturgical ministry of a deacon is different in essence from the liturgical ministry of the laity because the deacon is an ordained minister of the Church; yet this ministry is also distinct from the priestly ministry (Directory, 28). On the one hand deacons do not only exercise a function, but they must also assume a more universal concern for the building up and unity of the Church and for co-ordinating and encouraging the liturgical ministry and work of the laity. The ministry of the deacon is one of service or support (30). In the liturgy, the deacon is not normally the presider but the first assistant to the bishop or parish priests (22). As one intimately involved in the life and charitable work of the community, the deacon is well qualified to model the compassion and service of Christ and to voice the needs of the community to the assembly itself, both in the prayer of intercession and in a call for action by the people of God. As a servant of the community and assistant to the bishop or pastor, the deacon's ministry of proclamation and service is tied to preparation, catechesis and celebration (30).

**Liturgical Participation**

**Preaching**

As an assistant, the deacon is not normally the homilist at the eucharist. Deacons do have the faculty to preach, nevertheless in light of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, the presider of the liturgy is the normal preacher (24). Thus when a deacon presides at a liturgical celebration, he is the normal preacher of the homily. But at the eucharist a deacon preaches only occasionally, usually taking his turn on a regular basis. Some deacons may preach more often due to the illness or advanced age of the parish priest.

**Eucharist**

The essence of the diaconal ministry is seen in the eucharist. Here the deacon assists those who preside at the celebration "and thus manifests Christ the servant" (32). This indeed is a special charism of humble service to the community, for the role of the deacon is not a large one: during the liturgy of the word he proclaims the gospel and announces the intentions of the general intercessions; at the altar he cares for the chalice and sacramentary (book of prayers) and is an ordinary minister of communion (32). This calls for a person who is willing to assume a supportive role to the presbyter or bishop who presides.

The deacon, as well as the priest and all who exercise a liturgical role at the eucharist, is first and foremost a member of the body of Christ and a member of the worshipping assembly. As a member of the assembly, the deacon participates in a full, active and conscious manner in the whole celebration, as well as exercising his proper role. With the assembly he listens to the readings and joins in the prayers, acclamations and songs of the liturgy. When not exercising a function particular to his ministry, the deacon joins the other members of the assembly in the liturgical action.

The deacon is also a minister of the assembly, that is one who assists the people to worship the living God. As one who exercises a ministry in the name of Christ, the deacon must show forth the humble service that characterized the ministry of Christ. His ministry is not exercised in his own name or for his personal advancement, but in the name of the Church and for the people of God. His ministry therefore is directed to the members of the assembly and for the glory of God.
The deacon may carry out the ministry of those not present, but hopefully this would be a rare occurrence, especially at the Sunday celebration of the eucharist.

In order to maintain the integral link between word and sacrament, proclaiming the gospel and administering the cup, there should normally be only one deacon who assists at any given celebration of Sunday eucharist in the parish. While the General Instruction allows the functions of the deacon to be divided between several deacons, this should be an exception. It would be better for the deacons of the parish to minister at different celebrations on the Sunday.

The Role of the Deacon at the Sunday Eucharist

Introductory Rites

During the introductory rites of the eucharist, there are some options to be considered: the use and carrying of the gospel book, the use of incense and the choice of the penitential or opening rite. If the community uses the book of the gospels, then the deacon (or reader) is the normal person to carry it. (See “Pastoral Notes on the Use of the Book of the Gospels,” National Bulletin on Liturgy 137 (Summer 1994), pp.115–125). Otherwise, as the assistant to the presider, the deacon carries a hymn book and walks just before or beside the priest. When carrying the book of the gospels, it is more appropriate for the deacon to walk in front of the priest rather than at his side.

With the priest, the deacon venerates the altar by bowing and kissing the altar. If the book of the gospels is used, the deacon places it flat on the altar before venerating and kissing the altar. If incense is used, the deacon assists. He accompanies the priest as the priest incenses the cross, the altar and the book of gospels. The priest is not incensed at this time.

After venerating the altar (and incensing it), the deacon goes to the chair with the priest, stands next to him, and assists as required. He may hold the sacramentary for the priest, if there is not a server to do this. However, if there is a server capable of holding the sacramentary, the deacon should not exercise this ministry.

The deacon may assist with the opening or penitential rite. In the rite of blessing and sprinkling of holy water, he may hold the vessel of water and move throughout the church at the same time as the priest to sprinkle the people with holy water. In the third penitential rite, he or another minister may proclaim the invocations to Christ.

Liturgy of the Word

With the presider, the deacon listens to the proclamation of the first and second readings and joins in the chants of the psalm and gospel acclamation.

If incense is to be used for the gospel, the deacon assists the priest when he puts incense in the censer during the singing of the Alleluia or other chant. Then he bows before the priest to receive the blessing. If the book of the gospels is on the altar, the deacon takes it and goes in procession to the ambo with the servers carrying candles, and the censer, when used. At the ambo the deacon greets the people, incenses the book, and proclaims the gospel reading.

The procession should be a true one. Moving from the altar to the ambo by a direct route does not make for a good procession. The procession may move around the front of the altar or through part of the assembly.

At the end of the gospel, the deacon says, “The gospel of the Lord.” He does not lift up the book of the gospels or the lectionary at this time. Only after the acclamation of the people does the deacon lift the gospel book or lectionary to kiss it. (It is better that the deacon lift the book to his lips rather than bend down to kiss the book.) He does not say aloud the prayer, “May the words of the gospel wipe away our sins.”

After the homily and creed, the priest introduces the general intercessions, the deacon announces the intentions at the ambo or chair or other suitable place. The
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best place is most likely dependent upon
the audio amplification system or where he
can best be heard.

Liturgy of the Eucharist
No. 133 of the General Instruction states
that “the care of the sacred vessels belongs
to the deacon.” Thus the presider remains
at the chair while the deacon and servers
prepare the altar. First, the servers bring a
corporal, a purificator (cloth) and the
sacramentary to the deacon at the altar.
Then one of the servers brings the cup and
container of water to the altar and holds
these as the presider joins the deacon at the
altar for the presentation of gifts. The other
server stands ready to receive the collec-
tion from the priest.

At the presentation of the gifts, the deacon
assists the priest to receive the gifts of the
people for the eucharist and the poor.
While it may be the common practice to
receive the bread first and collection last, it
might be more appropriate that the collection
and the gifts for the poor be presented
to the priest first. (If the bread comes first,
then the priest has to hand it to the server
who will have to hand it back to him after
the priest receives the other gifts. If the
bread comes last, the priest receives it and
is able to say the prayer immediately as he
places it on the altar.) The collection is
given to one of the servers and placed in a
suitable location. Next the presider
receives the container of wine and gives it
to the deacon. Finally the priest receives
the bread.

The priest silently says the prayer while
placing the bread on the altar; meanwhile,
the deacon receives the cup from the serv-
er and pours some wine into it and then
adds a few drops of water. (The water is
added only to the chalice; water is not
poured into the container of wine if it is
left on the altar for communion under both
kinds.)

After the priest places the bread on the
altar, and the deacon has prepared the
chalice, the deacon hands the chalice to
the priest. (He may also prepare the cup
with wine and water at a side table.) The
container of wine remains on the altar, if
communion is to be given under both
kinds.

If incense is used, the deacon assists the
priest to incense the gifts and the altar;
afterwards he, or another minister, incens-
es the priest and the people.

During the eucharistic prayer, the deacon
stands slightly behind the priest, but at
hand near the altar, so that when needed
he may assist the priest with the chalice or
the sacramentary.

During the doxology of the eucharistic
prayer, the deacon stands next to the priest
and holds up the chalice as the priest rais-
es the plate with the eucharistic bread,
until the people have responded with the
acclamation “Amen.”

At the sign of peace the deacon invites all
to exchange the sign of peace. This invita-
tion should be direct and brief. The sign of
peace should not be confused with a rite of
welcome. Neither is it the time for lengthy
exhortation or explanation. The deacon
exchanges the sign of peace with the priest
and the other ministers near him. He may
also exchange the sign of peace with the
members of the assembly who are
nearby.

If communion is to be given under both
kinds, the deacon pours the consecrated
wine from the container of wine on the
altar into chalices brought by the servers. If
necessary the deacon may help the servers
to bring the extra plates and cups needed
for communion to the altar.

Although the General Instruction is silent
on the point, it seems appropriate for the
deacon to hold the chalice during the invita-
tion to communion as the priest and he
did for the doxology. This is especially so if
communion is to be given under both
kinds.

After the priest has received communion,
he gives communion under both kinds to
the deacon. The deacon then assists the
priest in giving communion to the auxil-
Ministers of communion and then to the other people.

No. 137 of the General Instruction states that "if communion is given under both kinds, the deacon ministers the cup to the communicants and is the last to drink from it." However, it seems more appropriate for both the priest and deacon to share in communion before ministering to others. This speaks of the unity of the communion rite under the form of bread and wine, the renewal of the covenant in the Lord's blood, and the acceptance of the Lord's invitation before extending that call to others. Receiving from the cup after the communion of the people is usually associated more with the consuming of the remaining sacred elements than the act of communion.

After communion, the vessels are brought to the side table. The deacon clears from the altar any remaining fragments and vessels. The deacon or priest or duly authorized person reverently brings the remaining eucharistic bread to the tabernacle. The deacon may then cleanse the vessels while the priest returns to the chair. However, it is better to cleanse the vessels after the celebration. This respects the time of silent prayer after communion.

Movement and activity at the altar or side table is distracting.

Concluding Rite

Following the time of silence and the prayer after communion, the deacon may make any brief announcements that are necessary, unless the priest prefers to do so himself.

After the priest's blessing, the deacon dismisses the people in these or similar words: "Go in the peace of Christ," or "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord," or "The Mass is ended, go in peace."

Some deacons expand the dismissal and other spoken parts of the mass. Perhaps they are conscious that their speaking role is limited. However, the people know what comes next, and expanding the dismissal throws off the normal rhythm of the concluding rite. The dismissal itself has its own natural rhythm of eight or so syllables. Few realize that each invitation to a dialogue with the assembly contains its own "cue" that triggers the congregational response. The natural cadence and words, "peace" or "peace of the Lord," or "ended" resonate with the assembly. If the deacon wishes to be spontaneous, he needs to be brief or conclude with the proper cue words.

If there is a concluding hymn, the deacon hands the priest a hymn book and takes one for himself. During the hymn the deacon goes with the priest to kiss the altar, makes the proper reverence to it, and leaves in the manner followed for the entrance procession.
The Children at Our Table

Catherine Ecker

The Question
For the last three decades the refrain, "full, conscious and active participation" has been used by many, including presenters at conferences, authors, liturgists and homilists. The reforms of the Second Vatican Council and the current renewal are moving toward a time when all the faithful are led to full participation. It is wise to remember that "full participation" will only happen after death when we have been fully transformed and made able to participate in the heavenly banquet. Until the day of our final transformation, we are called to take a full, conscious and active part in the earthly liturgy.

The call to full, conscious and active participation applies to all of the baptized, for it is through the waters of baptism that we are immersed into the paschal mystery and made able to join our brothers and sisters at the table of the Lord. Because all of the baptized are called to full participation, few would disagree that children like adults have a right to full, conscious and active participation. If disagreement exists it seems to occur when we define how children will participate.

Parishes choose various options for enabling children to take a full, conscious, active part in the liturgy. Although it is possible to institute a separate liturgy of the word for children, and to choose the eucharistic prayers for children, it is prudent to make these and many other choices with a clear understanding of the right and duty possessed by children who have been reborn through the waters of baptism.

Therefore, before we can even begin to examine how children participate in the weekly eucharistic celebration we need to explore two basic principles.

Two Basic Principles
The Primacy of the Assembly
Sunday is the Lord's day. On Sunday God gathers the world together as a sign of the new creation which has been established for all time by Jesus Christ. This assembly, which is convoked by God, is a sign of the kingdom coming to be here and now in our midst.

The signs of the kingdom can be seen in the makeup of the Sunday assembly. The Sunday assembly under God's call is a coming together in unity and peace in the midst of a world which has been broken, divided and alienated by sin. This assembly is comprised of the young, old, rich, poor, ill, healthy, educated, illiterate — all people. The status of all the people within the assembly is the same, all are called by God and all have entered into a new relationship which brings about radical changes. The Sunday assembly must by its very nature reflect the great diversity of people called by God. By definition alone, children of all ages are full members of the Sunday assembly.

The Right to Celebration
It is important to state and support the truth that the Sunday assembly includes all people; however, the presence of children is not always given notice or priority. The presence and needs of the children often can be overlooked. Each person who has

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responded to God's invitation and is part of the Sunday assembly has a right to participate in the celebration. Parish leaders sensitive to the needs of children have looked for ways to ensure that they are able to celebrate well. If children are not able to celebrate, perhaps we need to examine the elements of the parish liturgy rather than beginning some new program to meet the needs of children. In searching for a way to prepare a liturgy that engages children and enables them to celebrate, we must remember that what is good for children will also be good for adults. All people of the assembly, young and old alike have a right to authentic celebration.

**Describing Full, Conscious and Active Participation**

It is dangerous to try and capture in a few words what participation in the liturgy looks like. As a person grows spiritually and matures psychologically his or her experience of full participation will change. We can make the mistake of describing participation according to our intellect. Engaging in the dialogue of the liturgy is certainly one facet of participation. However, we are more than intellect. Our entire being is involved in the liturgy, therefore all our senses need to be involved. The sights, smells and sounds of the liturgy are to engage the assembly.

Although our participation will look different according to our age and development it is important to recall that our right to celebration is rooted in our shared baptism. For this reason we can not excuse ourselves for not providing children with authentic celebration because they are not yet adults.

**The Obstacles**

The right to authentic celebration by all people of the assembly seems to be at the very centre of full, conscious and active participation. Undoubtedly there are numerous obstacles that impede authentic celebration. In some places, the size of our parishes lead to Sunday liturgies with eight hundred to one thousand people. It can be difficult to foster celebration when the crowds are great and the seating is limited.

Often the architecture of the building means that adults see the backs of other adults, so imagine what the children must see. The physical structure often means that the majority of the children present are not able to see what is happening. My experience is that children often ask to sit in the choir loft. Their desire seems to be linked to their ability to see more when they are "above the crowd." When visiting family or friends, my own son walks into the church and heads straight for the front pew. He does not always appear to be participating, however he can see and hear what is happening. There are not enough front pews for all the children. These and other obstacles are not beyond a solution; however, for our purpose, we will acknowledge that they exist and turn to challenges which we can address.

**Naming Challenges and Solutions**

**A Separate Liturgy of the Word?**

Believing that the liturgy of the word is not accessible to children, many parishes move to implement a separate liturgy. The Directory for Masses with Children states, "Sometimes ... it will be appropriate to celebrate the liturgy of the word, including a homily, with the children in a separate, but not too distant room" (#17). The directory is speaking of children who have not yet entered the period of preadolescence. This period of preadolescence is generally described as children between the ages of four and nine.

If a parish chooses to have the children celebrate the liturgy of the word in a separate room it is important to note that this is not to be a regular occurrence. The directory uses the word "sometimes." Weekly celebrations of a separate liturgy of the word are not envisioned in this document. A separate liturgy of the word would not be planned simply because the children were seen to be too noisy, or because of a mistaken belief that the Sunday assembly is
primarily an adult gathering. Certainly the children would not leave the main assembly on major feasts such as Easter or Pentecost. We would not feed young children at a separate table when the family gathers to celebrate a birthday or Thanksgiving, so why would we remove the children from the main assembly on feast days?

The liturgy of the word for children is still liturgy; therefore we speak of adults who minister to the children as “celebration leaders” not “catechists.” This is a liturgical not a catechetical ministry. Nor are arts and crafts a part of the celebration. The word of God is proclaimed and there is a homiletic reflection.

Children at very young ages are able to read and pronounce the names of prehistoric animals. “Stegosaurus” and “brachiosaurus” are part of a child’s vocabulary; therefore we need to ask if a lectionary for children is really needed. Using a child’s bible or lectionary for children will not ensure authentic celebrations. The proclaimer who has heard the word of God in his or her own heart will be able to lead the children to hear God’s word in their midst.

A separate liturgy of the word for children is to encourage their participation; therefore any acclamations or hymns should be those that are sung in the main assembly. Singing the gospel acclamation to the tune of “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star” is an insult to the spiritual life of children. Children are able to experience the mystery of God; the task for adults is not to hinder this relationship.

It is vitally important that a parish community recognize that planning and celebrating the liturgy of the word with the children in a separate space can not be a lasting solution.

A More Lasting Solution?
The symbols of our faith are rich reflections of the deep mystery of our God. We need to use symbols which are visible and comprehensible to all. A processional cross which is carried high and with reverence will call young and old alike to come and worship. The presider who uses large gestures will be visible throughout the church and be able to lead the assembly into prayer.

The smell of beeswax candles is a scent that has become foreign to many. We are able to see true candles diminish as they provide us with light and rich decor week after week. When we use fake candles fuelled by butane maybe we are saying that things are the same week after week; nothing changes, not even the length of the candle. And what of the value of authentic natural materials in revealing the truth of God?

If the lectionary is carried in procession with dignity, and there is no Sunday missalette in sight anywhere in the worship space, it is clear that a parish is serious about listening to God’s word. When the liturgy of the word is proclaimed by storytellers who have been shaped and nurtured by the word of God, all people will be curious enough to stop reading their missalette and look up to watch and listen to the lector.

Flowers and greenery are pleasing to our senses and they call us to reflect on the majesty and splendour of our God. Children notice and respond to their environment in ways that adults have forgotten. We can not overstate the impact our symbols have on shaping the faith of God’s people.

Music that is accessible to all will invite the entire assembly to join in sung prayer. Children respond to melodies that have depth. Children are not satisfied with trite selections that are soon forgotten. Songs with cutesy gestures and boring refrains often embarrass children more quickly than the adults. In liturgy our song is prayer; we must never think of it as a time of performance by children or adults.

Forming Children for Full Participation
The task of planning and celebrating a liturgy which engages all people of the
The Children at our Table

assembly belongs to all the baptized. Preparing children to celebrate well happens in the home, parish and local Catholic school. Children who are accustomed to praying and eating at their family table will enter into the church's liturgy with greater ease.

Families who encourage storytelling are laying the foundation for their children to hear the stories of our ancestors in faith. Children who have heard the stories of our faith proclaimed in the classroom will respond differently during the liturgy of the word. When children encounter the word of God on a regular basis they, like the adults, are transformed.

It is so much easier to engage in a celebration when we are at ease with our surroundings. A parish can provide families with regular opportunities to tour the church. A member of the liturgy committee, pastoral staff or catechist who is available to answer questions will provide adults and children alike with a rewarding experience.

Conclusion

Embracing the primacy of the assembly will alter the way we view children. Children are not the future church, they are the present church. Children are full members of the Sunday assembly. Children are bound by their baptism to take a full, conscious and active part in the liturgy.

"Let the little children come to me; ... for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs” (Mark 10.16).

A Date to Remember

January 12, 2000 celebrates the 300th anniversary of the death of Marguerite Bourgeoys, foundress of the Congregation of Notre Dame.

Marguerite Bourgeoys 1700 - 2000
Deaf People and Deaf Culture

Prior to the French Revolution the famous Abbé Michel de l’Épée, founder of the first state-sponsored school for the Deaf in the world, organized sign-language into a teaching method and formed the world renowned l’Insitut des Sourds Muets in Paris. It was to be the model for hundreds of educational centres to follow, and allowed and fostered the visual language natural to the Deaf. However, some theologians opposed the use of sign-language by citing the text from Romans 10.17, “So faith comes from what is heard,” as if the physical act of hearing was the only channel to the soul. Fortunately we have gone beyond such a limited fundamentalist notion of “hearing” and “listening.”

The medical model looks on deafness as something to be “fixed” or repaired. An interesting phenomenon has occurred in the past 15 years in the relatively small world of the Deaf. Increased awareness of the uniqueness of the Deaf world and culture has brought to mind many of the gifts that Deaf people can bring to ministry not only in their own milieu but likewise to enrich the “normal” parochial hearing world. Most members of the Deaf community reject the medical model as too narrow and incomplete.

In the milieu of English-speaking Canada it is worth noting that deaf people are not just English-speakers who can’t hear. Those who are pre-lingually deaf (i.e. are either born deaf or become deaf before they have learned to speak) usually live on the fringe of their Church. For more than half of the dioceses in North America there are no pastoral services for Deaf people. If a Deaf person attends a Church service with members of his/her family it is like being in a foreign country understanding neither ritual nor homily and hence not being able to fully participate.

In Canada, for well over a hundred years, most of the children in our provincial schools for the Deaf spent about 80% of their early years from the age of 6 to 20 in the residential school setting, not only being educated and prepared for the workplace, but acquiring a culture (a way of looking at life) and a sophisticated sign-language, meeting their future spouses and forming friendships that would continue throughout their lives. Customarily the school had a greater impact on the Deaf person than the home, where often there was little communication or socialization.

Peter Monty, S.J., was Ontario Catholic Chaplain for the Deaf for 25 years, and for 15 years was Canadian Chaplain for the International Catholic Deaf Association where he was involved in a number of international projects for liturgy and pastoral care of Deaf persons. He is now working in Winnipeg in pastoral care with the Deaf at the Deaf Centre of Manitoba.

1 The word “Deaf” with “D” in the upper case is used to denote deafness with all its implications of the “Deaf World,” sign language, communications, culture, etc., while “deaf” in the lower case denotes the physical fact of not hearing.
Removing Barriers

Pope John Paul II, when addressing the World Federation of Deaf Persons in 1987, called for an increase in the number of persons in the Church who dedicate themselves in a special way to the removal of barriers. "In this way, the human network of the non-hearing and the vaster body of society would be strengthened. Society, then, which has so often been indifferent or alienating, could instead, in its structures and its laws, open itself to and welcome the presence and contribution of these persons to realize fully their specific human, social, cultural and spiritual qualities."

The goal of all liturgy is unitive, to build up the body of Christ. "In order to make progress, the people of God must remain constantly open to the removal of any communication barriers, as well as to the need of changing personal attitudes .... Even if it takes some time to arrive at the desired goal of full and active participation in the Church of all its members, their equal dignity as persons compels us to work to this end — this oneness with the Father." The "hearing" Church tends to lay emphasis on the spoken word as heard, while a more holistic approach would emphasize the Word become flesh. A liturgy that is more eye-focused than verbal and cerebral would be a step in the direction of unity and inclusivity not only for hearing-impaired people but for all who function better with visual symbol and the artistry of movement. The use of gesture, liturgical dance, good banners, overhead transparencies, pictures, and incense in a balanced and non-distracting manner may well enhance a more accessible style for those gifted in ways other than auditory intellect.

"Eye-centred"

Deaf persons tend to learn visually and experientially. Often, learning is the result of a process of trial and error, in which the Deaf individual learns gradually through experimentation. A written text is difficult for many Deaf persons to comprehend. A Deaf person functioning in a culture that is dependent on texts for much of its education will feel out of place. Little education happens from classes dependent on texts. This is especially true of religion classes based solely on a text. Therefore the religious information of a Deaf person may be seriously deficient.4

American Sign Language (ASL) as visual language was largely denigrated in the education of Deaf children in North America from the 1880s to the 1960s; and then, with the evident high failure rate in exclusively oral/aural education, came a resurgence in sign-language in the residential schools for the Deaf. The rehabilitation of signs from "the underground" coincided to a large extent with the coming of the vernacular and the Vatican II reform of the liturgy in the Catholic Church in the late 1960s. Since then, a number of efforts have been made to adapt the liturgy to make it more comprehensible to Deaf persons.

The aesthetics of sign-language has a special role to play in "Deaf" liturgy. We know that liturgical music for hearing people has a primary role in affectively moving hearts and stirring emotions of love and praise; its primary role is not to communi-

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2 L'Osservatore Romano, 2 March 1987, no.9.
4 Eye-Centered, A Study on the Spirituality of Deaf People with Implications for Pastoral Ministry, National Catholic Office of the Deaf (NCOD), 7202 Buchanan St., Landover Hills, MD. "Strangers in a Foreign Land: Life Experiences of a Deaf Person in a Hearing Church," p. 61. NCOD is a membership organization of Catholic pastoral workers serving the Deaf community in the USA and Canada. It sponsors workshops on ministry, liturgy and religious education, and has published resource materials such as the above book, as well as a monthly magazine, Vision.
Liturgy and the Deaf • Visual Liturgy and Accessibility
care information. But how does one convey and incorporate this affective dimension? Rhythmic and repetitive signing that is aesthetically pleasing to the eye will often be the “visual music” that moves the Deaf person. Sometimes a heavy drumbeat is used to experience vibration, and occasionally dance and dramatic mime heightens the sacred and prayerful quality of the service.

Adapting the Liturgy to Meet Specific Needs

A particular problem for Deaf people is the rather complex language of the Latin rite prayers, especially the eucharistic prayers, of which the careful balance and highly stylized phrases are so frequently abstract. By contrast, most Deaf people and many less cerebrally-oriented hearing folk look for action and story, movement and direction. Everything in the structure of liturgy for the Deaf should converge on the visual. Thus for example, the homily for the Deaf person looks more to a scene or action than to the analysis of words and phrases. Our “hearing” liturgies are often so hyper-verbalized and replete with explanatory notes that the visual symbols are not allowed to speak for themselves. The eye-centred liturgy with dramatization, projected pictures or vivid scenes may be chosen in preference to several pages of text.

The Directory for Masses with Children not only recommends but indicates the necessity of adapting the provisions of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal to meet special needs. “We may fear spiritual harm if over the years children repeatedly experience in the Church things that are scarcely comprehensible to them: recent psychological study has established how profoundly children are formed by the religious experience of infancy and early childhood, according to their individual religious capacity” (#2). Further adaptations are suggested for children who are physically or mentally handicapped. This would surely apply then to the Deaf too. The Deaf cannot listen with the same attention as hearing people do. Simply to translate the English or Latin or any other vernacular into ASL, or worse to finger-spell every word is not Deaf user-friendly but will guarantee terminal tedium.

Eucharistic Prayer for the Deaf

A special “Eucharistic Prayer for the Deaf” was composed in Britain and approved by the Congregation for Divine Worship in 1992 for use in the dioceses of England and Wales with the condition that the words be pronounced by the presiding celebrant. But what is interesting is this: in the letter of Cardinal Orta, the Prefect for the Congregation confirming approval to Cardinal Hume, President of the Bishops’ Conference, he says “Since this prayer was presented as a text to be signed it should never be used unless it is signed.” The visual word takes now a parity with, if not a precedence over, the spoken word. The preamble of the officially approved text maintains that while the form and content of the prayer resembles the eucharistic prayers of the Roman Rite, the “adaptation of the language of liturgical texts for use with the deaf has to take into account the restrictions imposed on the expression of ideas by those commonly understood signs and gestures.” This keeps in mind the primacy of the visual. The goal being “conscious, active and interior participation,” the choice of words has been given careful consideration, “so that there is no confusion between the spoken word, which can often be lip-read, and the sign which signifies the word.”

5 Sometimes called “Visible English,” this method consists of spelling each word out manually, each letter having its own sign.
7 Ibid, p. 786.
To illustrate the simpler more concrete language of this style, take the Preface which can be extended “according to the understanding of the congregation present.”

Priest: Father, thank you, because you give us a world that is wonderful. Father, we thank you, because you give us Jesus, your Son. Before, we your people wandered far away from you. But Jesus led us back to you. Now we can walk a new way. This is why with the angels and the saints we thank you and praise you.

Priest & People: Holy, holy, holy Lord, you are God of heaven and earth. Glory to Jesus your only Son.

The simple vocabulary in this preface lends itself to ease of simultaneous signing and speaking, and is correspondingly adaptable to circumstances and the nature of the worshiping community. By way of illustration, one may note the phrases, “we your people wandered far away from you,” “Jesus led us back to you” and “now we can walk a new way”; how readily they imply picture, movement and direction so important in visual liturgy.

More Gestures, Fewer Words

A visual liturgy for the Deaf will inevitably encourage simplicity and directness of style, economy of verbiage and use of body language in movement and visual symbol. The occasional vestige of symbolic gesture is present in theory but rarely employed in verbal liturgy. How often do we strike our breasts or bow in worship? Formerly the mea culpa was accompanied by the Semitic beating of breast to emphasize softening of the heart and metanoia; while the expansive gesture of the priest with arms accompanying the invocation, “The Lord be with you,” invited from the congregation a corresponding gestural reply; the raising of hands with the invitation, “Lift up your hearts,” was followed with the appropriate response of lifting up hands, “We lift them up to the Lord.” Other visible gestures of worship are too frequently omitted: the profound bow in the Roman Canon, the First Eucharistic Prayer, accompanying the memorial prayer, “Look with favour on these offerings...” not to mention the signs of the cross and blessings and sharing the sign of peace, elevation of gifts, offering of host and cup, genuflection, etc. In an age before the vernacular, these actions and gestures had more prominence and meaning in worship.

On the one hand, the increased and occasional participation by the Deaf in a “hearing” parish liturgy can be a powerful sign of the kingdom — “the Deaf shall hear” — and at the same time incorporating elements of the more visual liturgy of the Deaf might help dismantle some of our tedious verbosity. If we succeed in a renewal of gesture and visual symbol then when Deaf persons engage in liturgies in our “hearing” parishes, they may feel more like they are at home and less like they are in a foreign land.

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8 Ibid, p. 787. The priest may extend this thanksgiving according to the understanding of the congregation present: For children: Father, we thank you because you give us a world that is wonderful: you give us the sun that shines, the flowers that grow and the food we eat. For adults: Father, we thank you because you give us a world that is wonderful: where we can live in peace and be happy with our families and friends.
Signed Masses and Participation

This article is based on a conversation with Kevin Brockerville, a deacon of the archdiocese of Toronto, and Michael Gauthier, a seasoned sign language interpreter and former lay pastoral worker with the St. Francis Catholic Deaf Community in Toronto.

In the last decades of the twentieth century North American society has become increasingly sensitive to the needs of those whose physical differences might place them at a disadvantage in many social contexts. We see ramps to increase accessibility for people who use wheelchairs or who would find a staircase to be a barrier. Lowered drinking fountains and specially adapted washroom facilities are also common. In many buildings, elevator buttons are marked with Braille indicators. The city of Toronto is experimenting with traffic signals that make noises to assist blind people.

Newer televisions are equipped with an option to tune in to closed captioning for the hearing impaired. It is not uncommon to attend events — including liturgical celebrations — where the spoken word is simultaneously signed for the Deaf. We assume that such efforts at inclusion work for all concerned; and often they do. In this article we explore the question of signed masses for the Deaf from the perspective of a Deaf person.

Deacon Kevin Brockerville was born deaf. He was raised in Lawn, Newfoundland, and moved to Toronto at the age of 29. His childhood experience of Sunday mass was within an exclusively hearing context. Kevin's memory of his childhood experience is that mass began with hearing people doing a lot of talking and it concluded with communion in which he knew he received Jesus in a very special way. In Toronto, as in most major cities, the size of the Catholic Deaf community warranted the establishment of a worshipping community under the pastoral leadership of a priest who could communicate in sign language. Here, a whole new and important world was opened for Kevin. The signing of the mass partnered with an up-to-date post-Vatican II catechesis helped him to make sense of the whole experience of the Sunday celebration.

One might be tempted to say, "Well, the problem is solved; let's move on." But is this really all there is? With the help of Michael Gauthier, I put some questions to Deacon Brockerville: Does the "signed mass" solve the problem for all deaf people? Are the Deaf now able to participate fully, consciously and actively in the liturgy of the Church? What work remains to be done?

The Uniqueness of American Sign Language

To understand the remaining barriers it is important to grasp the uniqueness of American Sign Language (ASL). As Peter Monty points out in his article in this Bulletin, the Deaf are not English-speakers who can't hear. For the Deaf, English, if mastered to any degree, is a second language. Their first language is ASL. ASL is not "English on the hands." English words and ASL signs may share meaning, but, as with any other pair of languages, there will always be differences where the two do not overlap and cannot be made to do so. Take

In this article, the term "the Deaf" refers to the culturally Deaf who identify themselves as Deaf and share a culture and community, not just a medical condition. (This is the definition used by the Canadian Hearing Society.)
for example the word “who” in the opening of the Lord’s Prayer. In English the word “who” can be a relative pronoun (as in the Lord’s Prayer) or an interrogative pronoun (“Who are you?”). In ASL the same sign cannot be used for both meanings. If one simply looks up the sign for “who” in a sign book, one will inevitably find the sign for the interrogative. If we then use that sign in the Lord’s Prayer, we, in effect, ask God about the population of heaven.

In addition, ASL does not use the same word order as English. Signing an English liturgical text — or any other text for that matter — word-for-word (“Signed English”) would make as much sense as proclaiming in English a eucharistic prayer word-for-word using a printed Latin text without repairing the word order or filling in the grammatical connectors.

Furthermore, metaphorical language is intrinsic to the liturgy. However, ASL uses metaphor very differently from English, so a Signed English translation is seldom effective. When phrases like “our daily bread” are interpreted literally they can become meaningless and nonsensical. To further complicate matters, in ASL important meaning is also contributed by other body parts, especially the face.

So it is apparent that the success of the signed mass revolves around the priest’s signing skills. This refers first to the clarity and accuracy of hand configurations and movements, but also, and perhaps more importantly, to a thorough familiarity with the meaning of the signs and how ASL works as a language in its own right.

When texts are repeated or predictable — as in the case of most liturgical texts — misunderstandings can eventually be ironed out through catechesis, and inappropriate uses of signs by novice signers can be corrected with the help of skilled signers. Such is not the case with the homily. Within a couple of minutes, misunderstandings and confusions arising from the use of Signed English can compound themselves so that for a Deaf assembly this crucial moment in the liturgy is incomprehensible. For this reason, Kevin Brockerville contends that at the very least the homily must be in ASL rather than in Signed English. Effective preaching in a Deaf community requires that the preacher go beyond Signed English to ASL.

Lastly, it is part of the physical nature of ASL that it is a very intimate language; it does not lend itself to large group communication. When a single interpreter is signing for a large group there is automatically a feeling of detachment and the potential for loss of meaning grows exponentially.

**Liturgy in a World Without Song**

Other barriers to participation stem from the nature of the liturgy itself. We are accustomed to being told that liturgy is inherently musical. There is little in our liturgy that did not originate as a sung text. Choral singing and singalongs are a part of everyday life in the hearing world. Hearing people also grow up learning to recite standardized texts: poems, chants, nursery rhymes, etc. However, neither songs nor standardized texts exist naturally in ASL; they are only used when imported from the hearing world, for example, the singing of “Happy Birthday.” Participation in the longer prayers of the liturgy — the Glory to God, the Creed, and even the Lord’s Prayer — becomes problematic in the ASL context. The printed texts may be standardized, but their signed equivalents are not. Typically, a skilled signer leads the responses of the Deaf assembly who simply copy the leader. The translation may vary from leader to leader and the text is usually Signed English, not ASL. Consequently, so much energy goes into the physical work of copying the leader’s actions that meaning and prayer fall by the wayside.

**Inculturation for the Deaf Community?**

What can be done? It seems that what we have here is a need for inculturation. Here is one possibility. ASL is neither a spoken nor a written language. If we want a stan-
standardized liturgical text we must gather skilled users of ASL along with individuals who are familiar with the liturgical texts and the principles of text translation. This group could produce an ASL "text" rather than a foreign language text to be signed. This standardized text then needs to be committed to film or video for reference when memorizing and teaching the texts.

Secondly, Michael Depick, a seminarian and a member of the Oblates of St. Frances de Sales, who is himself Deaf, has proposed a culturally appropriate adaptation whereby a leader would sign longer texts and the assembly would simply sign their assent throughout, either using the "yes" sign or perhaps by means of short acclamations similar to those proposed for the eucharistic prayers of the new sacramentary.

**Bilingual/Bicultural Celebrations**

The Deaf experience liturgical celebrations in three ways: a) within a mostly hearing assembly with no signing, b) within a mostly hearing assembly with Signed English, and c) within a mostly Deaf assembly using varying degrees of Signed English and ASL. Whenever hearing people celebrate together with the Deaf, we must remember that we are in a bilingual/bicultural situation. Accommodations beyond the signing are necessary. Many of these are outlined in Peter Monty's article. Kevin and Michael would add others. It must be kept in mind that Signed English will always take longer than spoken English will; and Signed English will not be as easily understood by the Deaf as will ASL. Impromptu remarks should be kept to a minimum. Introductory comments should be well-planned and straight-forward. Homilies must be kept short. In many cases it would help to make use of a skilled ASL interpreter who has had the chance to study the text of both the homily and any special rites well in advance, in order to compose the best possible translation.

**Conclusion**

The Deaf community constitutes an invisible minority. Tremendous progress has been made in recent years in situations where the Deaf and hearing worlds meet. Kevin Brockerville is one of a small handful of Deaf deacons in Ontario. The meeting of the two cultures — hearing and Deaf — has fostered the formation of these pioneers and the formation of other ministries within the Deaf community. The future holds much promise for the de-marginalization of the Deaf.
Liturgical Formation and Persons with Developmental Disabilities
An Inclusive Worship Community

Coletta Dunn

Are All Welcome?

All of Christian life, from our baptism to the experience of the beatific vision, is a journey with the Risen Christ to God in glory. Jesus is the cause of our “yes” to our baptismal call. God desires all of us — regardless of gifts or limitation — to echo the “yes” Jesus made for us in his paschal journey. In the time between Jesus’ resurrection and the final judgment our “yes” is most visible when Christians meet in worship. How can this worship be complete unless those unfairly kept from the table be welcomed by our Church?

Our Church is really catholic when it has room for a wide variety of persons who seek to praise God together: persons who able to give full, conscious and active praise in community worship and those who are less able. The latter group includes people with physical and cognitive handicaps which prevent full access and full participation. The building codes of our cities have raised challenges to our parish communities and have reminded us of our moral and legal responsibility for physical access. Today few places of worship exclude those who formerly faced insurmountable physical barriers. Much more needs to be done, however, to afford fuller, more conscious participation for those with cognitive and behavioural challenges.

It is no longer the stairs that prevent access; it is the menacing stares of others in the assembly. Parents may wish their family to participate in parish life, but their young Cory (or whatever his/her Christian name) is learning disabled and hyperactive, and they are embarrassed by the stares and glares of fellow worshippers who are sensitive to his or her behaviour. These stares keep Cory and Cory’s parents from eucharist; sometimes the stares alienate whole families from church.

Removing Barriers

Cory’s family cannot change the situation alone. Pastors and Christian formation directors with various titles and responsibilities need to address the physical, social and educational barriers that keep the Corys from parish life. Everyone in the community can be instrumental in removing barriers: the forbidding stairs and the prejudices behind the intimidating stares. It is not Cory’s parents who need to initiate religious education and sacramental preparation for persons with special needs. It is the challenge for the parish community to provide education and formation needed by all in the parish. We need education regarding differences; we need welcoming of these differences, if the situation is to change.

Indeed the Corys in our parish communities need to have religious formation adapted to their readiness, appropriate behaviour modification, and visual and auditory assistance if vision or hearing impairment is manifest. Classrooms for Christian formation classes can be adapted with minimal change and maximal hospitality to make all learners welcome. Assistants

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may be needed in some catechetical situations. Cory may need a “buddy” or a
co-operative learning group who will serve as role models and who will introduce
him/her to appropriate church behaviour. Cory’s parents and catechists will need reli-
gious education resources that are sensitive to the developmental levels of children and
adults who need special assistance.

Help is Available

The Journey with Jesus: Call to Communion,
Call to Reconciliation and Call to Service
curricula are family-oriented and call for
one-to-one teaching of children who have
difficulty with group work in catechesis.
Sixty lessons are developed for each of the
sacraments — eucharist, reconciliation and
confirmation — beginning with readiness
lessons for each. Immediate preparation
and follow-up sessions related to each
sacrament take into account both psycho-
logical and spiritual development of per-
sons with cognitive disabilities.

At the most basic level, Call to Communion
introduces the child to communion with
God through prayer. The second level of
instruction celebrates the meaning and
manner of sacramental meeting with God
in eucharist. At a more developed level
youth are encouraged to adopt a life of
prayerful communion.

Lessons related to reconciliation encourage
youth to accept God’s gifts gratefully and to
recognize times when these gifts have been
misused. The catechist who works with the
young people leads them to expressions of
sacramental reconciliation and to a life of
generous thanksgiving.

Sixty lessons related to service suggest a call
to the social dimensions of our confirma-
tion. Lessons use the rite of confirmation
itself as a further call to Christian maturity.
The basic level familiarizes the student
with Mary, the perfect responder to God;
and the more advanced level examines the
implications of the confirmation “yes.”

All lessons give suggestions to the inexpe-
riened catechist, simple suggested activi-
ties to reinforce learning, scripted dialogue
and appropriate prayer services. A parent
packet provides guidance to those who nur-
ture the lesson from class to class and who
lead the child from lessons to prayer.

Developmentally challenged youth and
adults can ponder the Sunday gospel read-
ings of the three-year lectionary and can be
led to simple expressions of discipleship
based on the call of the gospel using the
program Journey with Jesus: Gospel
Study. These lessons — simple line draw-
ings illustrating the gospel setting — and
accompanying celebrations, are predicated
on the belief that developmentally chal-
 lenged persons can learn the essentials of
our Catholic tradition and can develop a
genuine prayer life if given proper religious
formation.

The Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Program to
Improve Catholic Religious Education
for Children and Adults with Mental
Retarda-
tion, an extensive curriculum, is the
product of collaborative work by gifted
special educators from the United States. It
is specially designed in response to the need
for materials that are sequential and faith-
ful to the Catechism of the Catholic
Church. Seventeen of the more than two
hundred lessons are related to the liturgical
year and suggest ways we enter into the
events of Jesus’ life.

Developmental Disabilities and Sacramental
Access, edited by E. Foley, is an excellent
and thorough introduction to the issues
involved and the steps that must be taken.
Seven essays by pastoral theologians exam-
ine the topic from biblical, ethical and
canonical perspectives. Authors relate ways
to overcome discrimination and lack of
sacramental access.

Adults with Special Needs

Sometimes Cory is an adult resident of
a nearby group home; he or she is a
de-institutionalized person with special
needs. Often previous religious formation
has not introduced Cory to full, conscious

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1   See full listing below.
and active participation in the life of their Church. Local parishes will find a number of resources to assist them in welcoming these adults.¹

Gifts for the Church

Examples abound of the growth in parish communities when an inclusive, rich liturgical life that includes persons with handicaps is fostered. Families benefit when their children are welcomed at the table of the Lord through appropriate catechesis that addresses the child's cognitive and developmental handicaps. Inspired by Multiple Intelligence theories, catechists now use a wide variety of approaches to capitalize on the giftedness as well as the limitations of individuals.

The whole Church is enriched because those whom we now recognize as having value have been able to bring their gifts to the altar:

• At St. Coletta in Wisconsin several low-verbal youth are signing the songs sung by the assembly as their communion meditation.

• At a university Church in the inner city a young man with Down's syndrome is now a devout minister of communion. He may never obtain an advanced degree from the university, but he has become the model worshipper for many who worship there.

• A parish boasts of their finest proclaimer of the word who happens to be a resident from the nearby home for the blind.

• Parents of an autistic young adult confess that their daughter would today be a very lonely person had it not been for the devotion of a catechist who took the time to prepare their daughter for sacraments and had taught her to pray.

The above are not the results of token, patronizing gestures on the part of catechists and local liturgy committees. They are due to genuine efforts of caring Christians toward inclusion for our eucharistic communities. When persons with disabilities are prepared, welcomed and active in parish life, the body of Christ is more complete and God is more fully glorified.

Resource List

General


For Use with Children


For use with adults


New Challenges, New Solutions: Responding to the Needs of Persons with Disabilities

Mary Hamilton

An Honourable History of Service

In the latter decades of this century, the work of Jean Vanier has inspired Catholics, and others in Canada and around the world, because of his approach to ministry among persons with disabilities. During 1981, the International Year of Disabled Persons, Pope John Paul II reminded the Church not to relinquish its role as leader in fulfilling the gospel mandate among disabled persons. Canada, and in particular the Church in Canada, has a history of proactive work in this area dating back to the seventeenth century.

Ontario: One Example

Ontario is but one example of how the Church’s ministry to the disabled has evolved and continues to evolve in our country. As early as the seventeenth century, the Church (namely the Recollet, Jesuit and Sulpician Fathers, and the Ursulines, Sisters of Hotel Dieu, the Congregation of Notre Dame and the Grey Sisters) was doing pioneering work in education of all peoples including those with special needs. Soon after Confederation, special provincial schools were opened in Ontario to serve the needs of the disabled. By the early part of this century, many special schools were offering classes for children with various special needs. In 1914, responsibility for identification of special needs shifted from the medical profession to educators. Many associations grew up to advocate for persons with special needs.

In 1969, government funding was made available to provide classes for the “trainable retarded,” but not in Catholic boards. Some boards received special permission to send itinerant teachers to work with Catholic students in the public school classes on “release time”; and special programs were designed for this purpose.

In 1980, the Ontario bishops prepared a document, One in Christ Jesus, to assist the Catholic community to carry forward the broadening of this important ministry. In the same year, the Catholic community finally convinced the Ontario government to fund special classes in Catholic school boards. The 1980’s saw the blossoming of parish groups serving the needs of the disabled. In the last fifteen years, efforts at integration have increased; many of the special needs classes have been closed and children have been integrated into regular classes. Many Catholic children with special needs are now attending Catholic schools and receiving their religious education there.

Responding in Times of Rapid Change

Legislation in 1984 provided funding for the education of persons with special needs up to the age of 21. Concern for the

Mary Hamilton is a member of the Congregation of Notre Dame who lives in Kingston, ON. Even though she is now retired from teaching, she continues to work energetically for persons with special needs.
spiritual care of those with special needs now turns to adults who have been de-institutionalized and are now living in group homes. Catholic Charities and other Catholic groups have stepped in to assist in serving the needs (housing, job-training, life skills, transportation and employment) of those beyond the age of 21.

Previously, institutional facilities generally were served by ecumenical chaplaincy teams, which offered ecumenical and denominational services and celebrations, and provided for immediate spiritual needs as they arose. Recent legislation, however, has meant the closing of institutions. The new housing situation presents a challenge to those who are charged with the religious education of Catholic adults with special needs who now live in group homes. Where are the Catholic adults with special needs now living? How and where can their spiritual needs now be met? Confidentiality restrictions make the task of finding and serving them even more complicated.

The task of serving Catholics with special needs requires co-ordination at the diocesan level. A body charged with the responsibility of discerning needs as well as ways of serving them is recommended. In addition, each parish council should have a member who is in touch with the needs of handicapped persons in the parish. Where this is not possible at the parish level, it may be done in parish clusters or deaneries. In this way a network may be formed to provide a welcoming, helping hand as needed. Whether parish-based or cluster-based, such a network would be sensitive to needs in time of grief, illness or other crises. The parish will also need to ensure that persons with special needs have access to Sunday mass, other sacraments and parish life. Through the parish council member who is charged with this responsibility, the parish could note and address physical needs (ramps, transportation to the church, assistance to visually or hearing impaired) and set up a buddy system to ensure that persons with special needs are as involved in parish life (liturgical, recreational, social, etc.) as they wish to be.

The Church in Canada remains committed to the fullest possible participation of persons with special needs in the liturgy, in the life of the Church and in society in general. 

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Vatican II (1962–1965) called upon the universal church to restore the order and sequence of the sacraments of initiation — baptism, confirmation and eucharist — for both adults and children of catechetical age. The vision is described for Canadians in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA). This unique faith journey unfolds in the parish family and is centred in our lectionary, as the living word of God is proclaimed throughout our liturgical year.

This journey of conversion is further described as four “periods” and three liturgical rites known as “steps.” These steps celebrate transitions from one period to another. The central and second period is called “the catechumenate.” During this period, the catechumens (not baptized) with their sponsors join the faithful on Sunday for the liturgy of the word. Then, says the rite, “When they are present in the assembly of the faithful they should be kindly dismissed ...” (RCIA, 75.3). In some cases, candidates for full communion (already baptized) may also be included in the dismissal.

**Sending Forth**

This sending forth is a form of hospitality. We invite the catechumens and candidates for full communion to be nourished by lectionary-based catechesis. Simply by leaving, they remind the whole assembly of the dignity of baptism and the importance of the eucharist.

Everyone needs to understand this dismissal correctly. It is a form of hospitality because the language of this dismissal invites them to experience Christ’s presence in the sharing of the word. The dismissal recognizes that only the fully initiated can share in communion. Parishioners need to know that this dismissal is an integral part of faith formation for both adults and children, whether they are catechumens or candidates for full communion. Their needs can best be met as they gather with their fellow pilgrims after they have shared with the faithful in the liturgy of the word. In this way, we also encourage them to be apostolic by learning how to spread the gospel in both word and deed (RCIA, 75.4).

Adults and children are sent from the assembly after the homily. Sponsors, however, do not leave; they join the catechumens and candidates after mass. Hopefully they will all be able to join other parishioners for hospitality and fellowship. Catechists do leave to lead the catechumens and candidates in a prayerful breaking open of God’s word proclaimed during the celebration and to share their insights into how it affects their lives. (Catechists will celebrate Sunday eucharist at another time.)

In some communities, children are sent forth after the opening greeting to participate in a liturgy of the word with children. These young people also need to be accompanied by their peers who are preparing to complete their initiation by the celebration of confirmation and eucharist (RCIA, 244.1). In this liturgy of the word, children go to another place to hear the Sunday scriptures appropriately adapted for use with children, and to participate in this lectionary-based catechesis, either with other children or with adults as

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dictated by pastoral circumstances and resources.

Kindly dismissed after the homily each Sunday, the catechumens will grow in their hunger for the eucharist as their conversion matures. This conversion journey will lead them from the awakening of faith called for by the first period of "inquiry," all the way through to that deeper faith that marks readiness for the Lenten period. Those who enter the Lenten period of purification and enlightenment leading to initiation at the Easter Vigil and post-baptismal catechesis or mystagogy will also have unique spiritual needs.

Presentations

Some of the rites belonging to the third period, the Lenten period of enlightenment and purification, are the presentations of the Creed (RCIA, 44-149) and the Lord's Prayer (RCIA, 165-170) for both adults and children. These texts voice cherished traditions of our Church: the summary of faith we profess (the Creed) and the disciples' model of prayer (the Lord's Prayer). These are two formulas that recast the faith expressed in our worship in other modes: creed and prayer.

Unless these presentations were celebrated in the second period (catechumenate), the Creed is presented sometime during the week following the first scrutiny, and the Lord's Prayer is presented after the third scrutiny. The "elect," as the unbaptized are called during this period, will profess the Creed before their baptism and join the community in the Lord's Prayer at the Easter Vigil's eucharist. Presenting these texts formally, and reciting them together deliberately and carefully is an important gift from the Church community to the "elect."

Lent, the period of purification and enlightenment, concludes with the paschal fast, which begins immediately following the community's celebration of the Mass of the Lord's Supper. The "elect" are advised to spend Saturday in prayer, reflection and fasting. When they gather in prayer on that day, several rites may be used, including the recitation or "giving back" of the Creed.

The Easter Vigil

The Easter Vigil is the primary time to celebrate the initiation of adults and children into the eucharistic community (RCIA, 198-233; 280-305; 418-452). These initiation sacraments are integral to the whole Easter celebration and are key to the understanding of it. In these catechumens, adults and children, Christ conquers death and rises to new life. We celebrate their (and our) sharing in that new life at Easter.

The emphasis on Easter is explained by the paschal character of baptism "since the initiation of Christians is the first sacramental sharing in Christ's dying and rising" (RCIA, 8). The most obvious and basic thing to say about baptism is that it is a rite by which we become members of the Church (Lumen Gentium, 11). The Church into which we enter through baptism is not merely a society of human beings, but the very body of Christ. "By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body" (1 Corinthians 12.13). Being "baptized into Christ" we "put on Christ" (Galatians 3.27). Specifically the baptized are incorporated into the risen Christ: we are baptized "into his death ... so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in the newness of life" (Romans 6.3-4). Baptism, as the first of the sacraments by which we are initiated into the Church, and the door which gives access to the Church's spiritual resources, clearly shows this ecclesial understanding of the sacraments.

Note that both adults and children of catechetical age celebrate full sacramental initiation: baptism, confirmation and eucharist. This restoration of the unity and sequence of the initiation sacraments is now normative. No adult or child of catechetical age is to be baptized without receiving confirmation and eucharist immediately afterward. The rite bases this insistence on "the unity of the paschal mystery, the close link between the mission of
the Son and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the connection between the two sacraments through which the Son and the Holy Spirit come with the Father to those who are baptized" (RCIA, 208).

Only following their baptism and confirmation do the "neophytes" join the rest of the assembly in the Easter eucharist. They have received the "Spirit of filial adoption and are part of the entire people of God in the celebration of the memorial of the Lord's death and resurrection" (Rite of Baptism for Children, General Introduction, 1). Only now will these newly baptized join the whole initiated assembly in exercising their priestly function as all intercede for all humanity. They take their place with God's priestly people to voice the general intercessions for the first time. Previously dismissed and sent forth, only now with all the faithful do they give thanks and praise to God for Jesus' passage to eternal life in the eucharistic prayer. Thus, the whole Church joins Christ, the eternal high priest, along with the heavenly multitude, in offering the priestly prayer of self-giving at the right hand of God.

For the first time as members of the faithful, they also pray the Lord's Prayer and share in the sign of peace. This greeting is an ancient celebration of God's peace within the community of the Holy Spirit in preparation for communion. All are invited to be reconciled and at peace with one another before they share in the sacrament of unity.

We welcome them at the table of the eucharist to share in Christ's body and blood, a foretaste of the eternal banquet that they are called to share in heaven. As fellow disciples, they will return here again and again to share with us in this sacred meal and be strengthened for our mission to embody God's life for the world. With the whole assembly of the faithful they are once again kindly dismissed: "Go in peace to love and serve the world."

Further Reading

Seasonal Note:
When Will It Be Dark Enough?

The world of astronomy defines various degrees of darkness. (For example "civil" refers to the degree of darkness at which a court of law acknowledges reduced visibility.) By the consensus of a number of people, "nautical twilight" best matches the meaning of "nightfall" as used in the sacramentary for the earliest acceptable time to begin the celebration of the Easter Vigil. Adjustments have been made to accommodate daylight saving time. Readers are advised to use the hour given for the centre nearest to their own situation.

| Time of "Nautical Twilight" (Darkness) on the Night of Easter Vigil (April 22, 2000) |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| St. John's                       | 9:21            | Halifax         | 9:23            |
| Toronto                          | 9:22            | Winnipeg        | 9:59            |
| Montreal                         | 9:06            | Edmonton        | 10:24           |
| Vancouver                        | 9:39            |                 |                 |

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Canadian Realities
A Celebration of the Easter Vigil

Bill Burke

Asking the Right Question
In September 1995 our parish liturgy committee began a study and an evaluation of the celebration of the Easter Vigil in our community. The number of people attending the Vigil had been steadily declining for several years; there were increasing calls to push the time of the Vigil further and further ahead into the early hours of Saturday evening. While the Christmas midnight mass continues to be popular in our congregation, a midnight Easter Vigil was not capturing the hearts of people.

As we read and discussed various commentaries and articles, several phrases stood out for their strong language. One, referring to the partial restoration in 1951, noted that this great liturgical experiment ordered by Pius XII has a profound meaning and structure; it is most definitely no toy to be played with. As we reflected on the structure and meaning of the Vigil, we became convinced that making it more convenient by shortening it and celebrating it early on Saturday evening was not the answer. It might attract more people, but, as the lesson of history shows, it could lead again to the near disappearance of the Paschal Vigil.

Our response was not to invent something new. We simply took the sacramentary and set about to implement it as completely and as well as we could. If the focus of the celebration is baptismal, then we will baptize. If the core of the Vigil is the liturgy of the word, then we will celebrate the liturgy of the word in its completeness, with special attention to psalmody familiar to the congregation. And so, we set about preparing the Vigil — in September.

As we did this work, one issue continued to be contentious: the time of the celebration. Again, we took our cue from a commentary which stated that on this one night the Church should be in reality what we should be symbolically all year: we should be found watching through the night, awaiting the return of the Lord. This said to us that the time of the Vigil is not incidental. Rather, it is crucial to the nature of the Vigil. The time of the Vigil is in itself a symbol that speaks.

The Answer We Arrived At
In January of 1998, we presented our plans to the parish on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord at the Sunday eucharist. The major plank in our proposal was that the liturgical celebration would begin with the lighting of a large outdoor bonfire. The fire would be lit at 4:30 AM on Sunday morning.

Throughout the Lenten season, the homilies connected to the scriptural themes of the Vigil. Each Sunday of Lent the assembly was encouraged to look toward the Vigil. We had no idea how this was going to turn out, but, at least, the Vigil became the talk of the town for three months. The reactions ranged from “That’s great!” to “You’re nuts!”

On Saturday of the Triduum, the church was open for quiet prayer (vigil?) from 7 PM onwards. The students of the grades eleven and twelve religion program agreed to vigil with us. For them it was an all-night retreat in the hall (the church basement), but every hour on the hour we went up to the church for a scripture reading and prayer. Parishioners were invited to join us

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for a few minutes of quiet prayer, if they could, at any point through the night. (Only five people did: this needs work.).

The high-school students were responsible for the liturgy of light. They lit the fire at 4 AM (a half-hour early!). A wondrous thing happened! People started arriving in groups of two and three — then in groups of five and six, and so on. People living near the church could be seen walking down the hill with small children in hand. The Knights of Columbus had offered to arrange transport for seniors. They began to arrive. The students had lit the fire early because they were in a youthful rush to get started. It proved to be a great idea. The fire was a beacon drawing people. They naturally gathered around it.

**Surprising Results**

In the darkness of the parking lot, it was difficult to tell the size of the crowd, but as we proceeded into the church we were elated. The church was packed! We had to put out extra chairs — something normally done only at Christmas and on Good Friday. After the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of baptism (one adult and two children of catechetical age), we began the liturgy of the eucharist just as the sun broke over the horizon. (This break with the rubric was due to an inadvertent miscalculation of time on our part.) At 7 AM, as the liturgical celebration ended, we invited everyone downstairs to a hot Easter breakfast (complimentary) hosted by the Knights of Columbus and served by the students of the confirmation class.

The whole experience was awesome. "The Vigil" continued to be the talk of the town for another month. Then spring and summer came and went, and it was September of 1998 and the liturgy committee was meeting again. Should we do it again for Easter of 1999? Was it a fluke? Was it just the novelty of it? Again we returned to the sacramentary and commentaries. We had not done this as a novelty. We had done it to implement what the church asked us to do.

So, in April of 1999 we did it again. This time we had two strikes against us. This was the night that the clocks went ahead one hour — another hour of sleep gone — and, second, this past April 3–4 in Cape Breton we had the heaviest snowfall of the year. Still they came. Again a full church, again a wonderful celebration. In September of 1999, our liturgy committee met again. This year, it is simply assumed that we have adopted this as parish practice.

We started by asking how we could encourage more people to attend the Vigil. We switched our focus and asked more pertinent questions: what is the nature of the Paschal Vigil and how can we best celebrate it? This involved much more than a time-change. It involved hard work and study. It involved co-operation with the religious education teachers and students, the youth group, and the Knights of Columbus. It involved parish preparation months ahead of time. But, somehow, the time-change pushed us to re-examine the nature and the power of this holy night.
Homily at the Funeral Mass of Len Sullivan


Recently I read a book about a priest. Each chapter began with a brief quote from George Bernanos’ “Diary of a Country Priest.” The heading of one chapter was: “A true priest is unable to love. Can’t you get that into your head?” My immediate thought was: “It's too bad you never met Len Sullivan.”

The priest we came to pray for and honour tonight was, above all, a sign to countless people — a sign of concern, service, encouragement and support, all offered as in genuine love. He was truly a person who allowed God’s love to shine through him and bring peace, blessing and grace to the ones his life touched. I count myself fortunate to be among their number, having shared his friendship and insights for over thirty years. My participation in his funeral rites is a paltry payment toward an inestimable debt.

Leonard Sullivan loved the Word in all the word's expressions. The spoken word, the written word, the word communicated by sign, gesture and rite. He was dedicated to the Word of God; and above all, and constantly, to the Word made flesh.

It's not surprising that he chose the gospel reading from Luke. Not only is it good literature — which Len appreciated — a fine example of the short story, but it contains those lines: “He explained to them all the things throughout the scriptures that were about himself,” and they said afterwards: “Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?”

That approach, which would have been so typical of Len, brings Job into the picture as a kind of prophetic icon of Jesus. “A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” (Isaiah 53.3, King James Version) abandoned by all, but never without hope. A man who knew in faith that his avenger, his rescuer, was still alive and that someday he would see him face to face. Len prayed that this suffering would lead others to see the suffering face of Christ.

The word of reconciliation from Paul to the Romans in the second reading is filled with a confidence, and makes “death-out-of-love” the sacrifice that assures salvation. If Christ died out of love for us when we were sinners and enemies, can he refuse to reconcile us now that we are on his side? Paul wanted to tell us that a repeated need for reconciliation, even a constant need, is a very positive sign. Len knew that this gathering tonight would be a “sinners rally” — we are all, every one of us, sinners. Jesus spoke of a sinner whom he reconciled, to the dismay of the self-righteous, saying, that her sins, her many sins, must have been forgiven because she loved much. This should be a call to sinners — that means all of us — to take heart.

Len's love of the Word was shown in his preaching, in his very creative writing style, in his many original contributions to the liturgical texts in English, and in his enduring interest and desire to study sacred scripture and the liturgy of the Church.
all this he had one goal in mind: to help people to hear the Word of the Lord and come to know his mercy and love. All the hours, days and years Len spent working on the lectionaries and the sacramentary were for no other purpose.

I came to visit Len about three weeks ago. On Pentecost we had a wonderful celebration together with viaticum under both species and many prayers from the feast. Afterwards he said to me, “How can I ever thank God for the privilege of being given an opportunity to help so many English-speaking people in Canada to worship in the language they understood?” My answer was: “We've just done that in our celebration, where all of us could share together God's great gift to you and to all of us, as we prayed the prayers for Pentecost and the eucharist in our own tongue, just like the disciples in Jerusalem.”

Len loved the Church, God's people gathered together with their priests around the bishop to celebrate the eucharist. He loved the Church in Regina where he worked so hard to make the vision of Vatican II a reality in people's lives.

He was committed to the bishop. Archbishop O'Neill was his idol. He gave Len the gift of priesthood. He set him on the path to make the liturgy his life. He sent him to Notre Dame while still a seminarian, and after Len received the degree in 1965, Archbishop O'Neill sent him to the National Office in Ottawa.

Archbishop Halpin gave Len the task of gathering the local Church as a worshipping family to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the diocese. And for the last three years Len had been calling me to tell me how Archbishop Mallon has been able to bring the scriptures to the people every time he preaches.

He loved the priests and was truly concerned for them and for their welfare. He often tried to make me jealous, telling me the priests of Regina were cared for so much better than the priests of Halifax. He saw the demands for ministry increasing and was a pioneer with the ritual for Sunday celebrations of the word.

But it was the people in the parishes where Len served, and others whom his life touched in a remarkable number of ways that came to understand how he lived the message of today's gospel. Many of them, perhaps most of them, were persons with needs. And you know, that is how today's gospel begins. (As so often happens with a good short story, we are so taken with the happy or intriguing ending that we forget how the story began.) Today's gospel began with people like ourselves: sad, downcast, puzzled, wondering, grieving. The one we came to admire and to need so much is gone; what will we do now?

Well, look at what the disciples on the road to Emmaus did. They listened to the scriptures. They asked Jesus to stay with them (not to get out of their life.) They sat down at a meal with him where they recognized his presence; and then he disappeared. That's what happens when we really accept the paschal mystery of the resurrection of Jesus. Once we truly believe it, we realize that the “spiritual body,” as Paul calls it, cannot be seen by bodily eyes. He is always invisible. But his presence, in love, makes it possible for us to appreciate the presence of others — even that of the departed; for, as the scriptures show, death is strong, but love is stronger.

How many of you have appreciated Len Sullivan's gift for getting people together to celebrate — to celebrate just being together, just being sisters and brothers? It's a way he has contributed greatly to my life.

If I had been asked to choose a scripture reading for this funeral liturgy, I would have taken other words of Paul to the Romans. These words describe Len Sullivan, the priest, better than any others I know: “Do not let your love be a pretense, but sincerely prefer good to evil. Love each other.

as sisters and brothers should and have a profound respect for each other. Work for the Lord with untiring effort and real dedication. If you have hope, it will make you cheerful. If any are in need of help, reach out to them; and make hospitality your special care” (Rom. 12.9–13).

Yes, Len, this is another of those times when you have drawn people together in celebration. We came to hear the Word; we have gathered around the table of the Lord to share the food and drink that makes us one family.

We want you to stay with us, and we know that when we are united in the love of the same Lord, we are most surely with one another.

We are here to pray for you as you have prayed for so many others. Each one has a prayer in their heart. I am speaking for all of us as I echo the final words from the ancient liturgical hymn to the Holy Spirit: Give him virtue’s sure reward. Give him your salvation Lord. Given him joys that never end. Amen! Alleluia!

James Hayes
Holy Rosary Cathedral, Regina, SK,
Friday, June 11, 1999.

James Hayes is archbishop emeritus of Halifax. In his retirement he remains active in hospital ministry and continues to work for the liturgical renewal in Canada.

Introduction
Recently the National Liturgy Office of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops circulated a questionnaire to bishops and priests concerning the number of parishioners who have celiac disease. The priests were asked to distribute the questionnaire to people in their parish who have celiac disease. Eighty-five responses were received from individuals who received the questionnaire from their parish priests. The questionnaire was also circulated in a newsletter published by the Canadian Celiac Association and, as a result, an additional sixty responses were received from individuals who saw the questionnaire in the newsletter. One unanswered question is whether all parish priests are aware that some members of their parish have celiac disease.

Although statistics are not readily available, it is estimated that one in every two thousand persons in Canada has celiac disease. One priest commented that he was not aware that there was anyone in the parish who had this disease until he received the questionnaire and began to inquire among the parishioners. Many of these people have suffered for years in silence.

Purpose
The purpose of this article is to present some of the facts concerning celiac disease and to look at the ways in which our parishes can help parishioners who have it to participate fully in our eucharistic liturgies. Although this is not a medical report, some medical information is necessary if our entire Church community is to deal compassionately with these individuals in
helping them to cope with their medical condition and still participate in the fullest way at our celebration of eucharist. "The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of the liturgy" (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, no. 14).

**What is Celiac Disease?**

Celiac disease is essentially an intolerance to gluten. Gluten is a protein found in wheat, rye, barley and oats. Although gluten sensitivity is not a food allergy, individuals with celiac disease avoid foods containing wheat, rye, barley and oats in the same way those with food allergies avoid the foods to which they are allergic. For persons with celiac disease, the toxic part of the gluten molecule is the prolamin portion: gliadin in wheat, secalin in rye, horedin in barley and evedin in oats. The gluten found in corn and rice does not contain this toxic portion.

Food is digested and absorbed in the small intestine. The small intestine is lined with microscopic finger-like projections called villi designed to provide the maximum area for nutrient absorption. These villi contain digestive enzymes.

In individuals with celiac disease, gluten ingestion results in damage to and destruction of the villi. This damage can be compared to the image of shag carpet changing into linoleum. Individuals who have this disease, consequently, cannot get any kind of nutritional benefit from any food until their damaged villi are healed.

The only way to get the damaged villi healthy and able to absorb goodness from other foods again is to completely eliminate gluten from the diet. Basically, gluten is a glue that keeps much of our food together. It is found in wheat, oats, rye, barley, wheat starch, hydrolyzed vegetable protein, hydrolyzed plant protein, and some spices. A person with celiac disease cannot ingest anything with gluten in it. All food, medications and even toothpaste must be gluten-free. A failure to follow this rule will cause damage to the villi, immense pain, and, if a great amount of gluten is taken, a comatose state and even death. Consuming even small amounts of gluten can eventually lead to cancer of the bowel.

**Communion**

For members of our Church (this is not just a Roman Catholic issue, but crosses ecumenical lines) the difficulty lies in what makes up our communion hosts or eucharistic bread. The problem is more complicated in the Roman Catholic Church because canon law requires the use of "wheat flour" for hosts and eucharistic bread, and as a result, people with celiac disease are unable to receive communion. Other denominations are not bound by canon law but most use wheat flour for their communion wafers.

**Questionnaire Results**

The results of the questionnaire (145 respondents) have revealed that people deal with this problem in a number of ways:

1) Some individuals simply receive a very small particle of the host (15). If the above information on the disease is taken seriously, however, this is not an ideal solution as these persons are consuming some gluten and serious damage to the intestinal villi does occur even with small amounts of gluten.

• Some individuals (15) can tolerate the regular host, but not bread.

2) Other persons receive communion from the cup (50). Our Catholic teaching states that, in communion, Christ is wholly present in the eucharistic bread and in the eucharistic wine. These individuals, by receiving only from the cup, are taking part fully in our eucharist. A difficulty arises when parishes do not offer the cup to the entire assembly. These individuals feel that they are singled out when they must go to the altar to receive from the cup while the rest of the assembly is not offered the cup.

• A request from several respondents (10) to the questionnaire is to urge more Churches to offer communion
From the National Office: Celiac Disease and Communion

under both species. (For further information, see the Episcopal Commission on Liturgy document Communion from the Cup, 1996. Reprinted in NBL #148 [Spring 1997] pp.41–52.) In parishes where both the bread and cup are offered at communion, eucharistic ministers need to be aware that individuals who do not receive the eucharistic bread or host and go directly to the cup are probably doing so because they have celiac disease.

• Receiving from the cup is not always the ideal solution for these individuals either. Some have diabetes as well as celiac disease and cannot receive the wine because it contains sugar.

• Several individuals (8) found that there was a danger in receiving from the cup because the wine could be contaminated if a particle of bread falls into the wine or is placed in that particular cup of wine at the breaking of bread.

• Another difficulty occurs if insufficient wine is offered and is completely consumed before these individuals present themselves for communion.

• Some individuals cannot receive certain kinds of wine because of additives to the wine. It might be possible to have these individuals make their own wine and bring it to the celebration of eucharist to be consecrated.

3) Some individuals bake their own gluten-free host or bread and bring it to mass. These are often kept wrapped in plastic or placed in a pyx so they do not come in contact with the other bread or hosts. Sometimes it is necessary for these individuals (or a parent in the case of children) to unwrap the host themselves so that it is not contaminated by the priest or eucharistic minister’s hands, which have been handling the ordinary eucharistic bread.

4) Individuals order gluten-free hosts from a supplier and bring these to the priest before Mass. These are put in a pyx or wrapped in plastic wrap as stated above. (Addresses for these suppliers are provided at the end of this article.)

Ecclesial Legislation

On March 10, 1996, a letter was sent to the Episcopal Conferences from the Vatican. It presented the official position of the Catholic Church with regard to gluten and the eucharist. This particular document stated that gluten-free hosts are invalid matter for communion. However, for the first time, Rome ruled that “low-gluten hosts are valid matter, provided that they contain the amount of gluten sufficient to obtain the confection of bread.” On first reading, persons who have celiac disease may be distressed because their main concern is to follow a gluten-free diet. A study printed in the New England Journal of Medicine (August 3, 1989, page 332) found that gluten-free communion hosts contain some wheat starch and trace amounts of gliadin; therefore these can be said to be within the confines of the law.

At the 7th International Symposium on Celiac Disease, which was held in Tampere, Finland on September 5–7, 1996, sources reported that the Catholic Church allows the host to be made from wheat starch. Archbishop Derek Worlock of Liverpool was diagnosed in the 1980s with celiac disease and he presented a strong case in Rome for individuals who have celiac disease to be allowed to receive special hosts at communion. Unfortunately he died on February 8, 1996, and it seems at present that no other bishop has taken up the cause in his absence.

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (no. 14) states:

The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as “a
chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" (1 Peter 2.9; see 2.4-5) is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.

In the reform and promotion of the liturgy, this full and active participation by 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 and therefore pastors must zealously strive in all their pastoral work to achieve such participation by means of the necessary instruction.

**Pastoral Sensitivity**

Jesus' command to his disciples at the Last Supper was "take and eat; take and drink." All members of our parish communities (bishops, priests and laity) must work together to ensure that persons with celiac disease are enabled to participate fully in the eucharist. The following positive steps might be taken at the parish level:

1. Each parish should educate the parishioners and eucharistic ministers on the nature of this disease.
2. Each parish should invite all persons with celiac disease to contact the pastor.
3. The pastor should allow those who have celiac disease several options:
   a) to receive communion under the species of wine alone — this can be the wine as distributed to the assembly or possibly wine made or provided by the individual and kept in a separate container;
   b) to receive communion with low-gluten or gluten-free hosts (which have a trace element of gliadin and are therefore valid matter);
   c) to receive holy communion under both kinds, with hosts as stated in b.

Recently some parishes have had to face the dilemma of dealing with individuals who are allergic to perfume and incense and have made adjustments in liturgical celebrations and asked the co-operation of parishioners. We are now being called upon to take some pastoral action to assist those people in our midst who have celiac disease.

**Distributors of Low-Gluten Hosts**

**Benedictine Sisters**

100 per bag ($6.00)
[contains 32% gluten]
Altar Bread Department
R.R. #1, Box 101
Clyde, MO 64432
U.S.A.
PHONE: 1-800-223-2772

Canadian Distributor:
**Sisters of the Precious Blood**

Altar Bread Department
P.O. Box #1046, LCD 1
Hamilton, ON L8N 3R4
PHONE: (905) 527-3745
FAX: (905) 527-2888

**Broughton's**

50 per box ($6.95)
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PHONE: (416) 690-4777
or 1-800-268-4449
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The Atlantic Liturgy Conference met in Halifax from May 2–5, 1999. Monday, May 3 was a "study day" open to all. The topic, "Preparing Liturgies for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000," was presented by Fr. Murray Kroetsch of the diocese of Hamilton, Sr. Donna Kelly of the National Liturgy Office, and Marilyn Sweet of the archdiocese of Halifax. Participants explored various aspects of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, focusing on the celebration of Sunday eucharist. They determined which jubilee theme would be most suitable for their own parish community, and sang hymns from CBW III that expressed those themes. Participants also discussed the demands of large group liturgies, drawing on their own experience to list factors that must be considered in planning for the large celebrations that may be a feature of the jubilee year. (The study day on a topic of interest to presiders and parish liturgy committees has been a regular feature of the annual meeting of the Conference for the past few years.)

The Atlantic Liturgy Conference came face to face with a grim reality this year. The closing of liturgy offices and the demise of commissions in the region is reflected in the life of the Conference itself. Half of the dioceses in the region do not send representatives to the annual meeting, and most liturgists living in the region are not taking part in the Conference. Finances are precarious. There is great difficulty in finding a diocese willing to undertake the development of the liturgy congress scheduled for 2001.

The fifteen people attending this year's meeting devoted a significant amount of time to an examination of the situation. The recent history of the Conference was reviewed. Many stories were told about the rise and fall of commissions. James M. Hayes, archbishop emeritus of Halifax, was an invaluable resource. He pointed to the importance of the Atlantic Liturgy Conference as an agent of the liturgical renewal since the Second Vatican Council, bringing to life in the region the recommendations of the National Liturgy Office and the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy. This has been achieved through the biennial liturgical congresses, the annual study days, and the network developed among meeting participants who continue to exchange information during the year. It was agreed that the Atlantic Liturgy Conference has always been and continues to be important for the participants, and for the liturgical life of the region. It was also agreed that ALC must foster the development and strengthening of liturgical commissions in the region. Some Conference members will collaborate to prepare a document for the Atlantic Episcopal Assembly highlighting the importance of liturgical commissions. A study day is being considered to provide support and guidance to commission members. Despite the difficulties facing it, the Conference will meet again in early May, 2000, with Jeannette Mercer of the archdiocese of St. John's, Newfoundland as Chair.
Facing Death Together: Parish Funerals, by Margaret Smith (Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications, 1998); 164 pp., $9.00 US.

When the Order of Christian Funerals (OCF) was published in 1989, pastoral ministers were introduced to a carefully planned ritual process to assist their ministry to the bereaved. The new ritual, which contains a variety of options to be selected according to particular circumstances, is inspired by a rich theological, pastoral and liturgical vision. Margaret Smith invites her readers to become familiar with this vision as they explore the rites provided in the OCF. She notes that the OCF is not a “how to” manual but a resource book containing models to be selected and adapted by the sensitive pastoral minister.

The author begins with a brief discussion on the experience of death and the perspective that faith brings to the experience of bereavement. Then she discusses in turn each of the rituals that form the Order of Christian Funerals. In the light of true stories from her pastoral experience, she identifies important pastoral issues related to the celebration of each rite and offers insightful questions for consideration. These questions are rooted in her overall concern for ritual honesty and integrity.

Ministers of consolation will find the insights and thought-provoking questions in this book helpful as they seek to connect the experience of grief with the Christian story.

A Time for Embracing: Reclaiming Reconciliation, by Julia Upton (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999); 116 pp., $11.95 US.

The topic of reconciliation is popular in this final year of preparation for the great Jubilee. But, this is not just another book on reconciliation. Julia Upton surveys recent literature and statistical reports on current practices relative to the sacrament of reconciliation and proposes that we are experiencing a transformation, not a dissolution of the sacrament. By analyzing the trends in contemporary American culture she identifies important factors which have had an impact on our thinking and sacramental practice. These include the triumph of the public, the triumph of the therapeutic, our understanding of addiction and addictive behaviour, the triumph of technology and immersion in consumerism.

Following brief reflections on reconciliation in the scriptures and in history, Julia Upton invites the reader to consider the sacramental dimension of reconciliation. She offers insights on the experience of reconciliation in the Lenten scrutinies and the renewal of baptismal promises at the Easter Vigil. She also draws our attention to the experience of reconciliation in the eucharistic liturgy and the eucharistic prayers of reconciliation, and places the rite of penance and reconciliation of individual penitents alongside the communal celebrations of God’s mercy. Finally, Julia Upton invites the reader to reflect on the many experiences of reconciliation as a way to safeguard and preserve the sacrament of reconciliation — an endangered species at present.

This book is highly recommended as a refreshing and insightful summary of the state of the sacrament of reconciliation at the dawn of a new millennium. It is a book that should be read especially by confessors, catechists, and all who wish to celebrate this sacrament in a meaningful way today.

Murray Kroetsch, pastor of St. Dominic’s Parish in Oakville, ON, also works in the Office of Liturgy of the diocese of Hamilton. He is currently chair of the Ontario Liturgical Conference.

This collection of texts on the eucharist is the latest in a series of sourcebooks on the liturgical seasons and rites of the church. This collection offers scriptural and liturgical texts together with excerpts from great spirit­u­­tal writers, historical documents and con­­­temporary literature collated according to eucharistic themes: hungering, gathering, praying, remembering, offering, eating and drinking, healing, feeding the world and Corpus Christi.

Like the previous books in this series, this sourcebook contains a wealth of texts that will provide spiritual nourishment to the reader. Many of the texts in this collection will prove useful to catechists and homilists as they lead others to a deeper understanding of the eucharist in daily life. Recommended.

**Wine and Bread**, by Photina Rech, OSB, Trans. By Heinz R. Kuehn (Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications, 1998); 118 pp., $15.00 US

This book is excerpted from a 1966 German book entitled *Key to the Cosmos: A Symbolism of Creation* by Photina Rech, a Benedictine nun. In two essays from the larger work, the author draws upon the scriptures, writings of Christian antiquity, the religious convictions and practices of pagan cultures and civilizations since ancient times, as well as poetry, folk legends and fairy tales to unpack the deep significance of wine and bread. She relates this wealth of insight to show how deeply these elements fashioned from creation are connected to the salvation of God's people and the eucharistic covenant.

This book is a valuable resource for those who wish to discover the deep significance of the elements that we use to ratify our baptismal covenant at the eucharistic table.

**I Will Lie Down This Night**, by Melissa Musick Nussbaum (Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications, 1995); 152 pp., $10.00 US.

This small booklet offers an insightful reflec­tion on our experience of night, the shape of our bedtime rituals and the liturgical prayer that concludes each day. A series of meditations on experiences of family life, the liturgical texts of compline and other spiritual writings are woven together to lead the reader to discover anew God's presence in the dying hours of the day. This is an ideal book for anyone who celebrates compline and for families who wish to discover God's presence in the rhythm of each day.

Readers will also enjoy Nussbaum's previous book, *I Will Arise This Day*, a series of meditations on the experience of greeting each new day and the prayer which accompanies the breaking of dawn.

**Saying Amen: A Mystagogy of Sacrament**, by Kathleen Hughes (Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications, 1999); 207 pp., $17.00 US.

This is a theology book — not one that merely contains theology, but one in which the reader does theology with an excellent guide! Kathleen Hughes invites the reader to contemplate the sacraments by considering the history and theology of the rites, but more importantly, by listening to the actual experiences of men and women at prayer. The purpose of this work, according to the author, is to assist worshippers and those who minister among them to understand and love the liturgy more, to participate more thoughtfully in its celebration and to embrace the communities they make to a way of life and to a vision of the reign of God each time they say, "Amen."

Kathleen Hughes introduces a method of understanding the sacraments that is deeply rooted in our Christian tradition. She invites the reader (together with those whom she has interviewed) to ask important questions about the experience of the rites: What did we just do? What was a significant moment for you? Why? What feeling was evoked? What seemed especially important? What experience did you bring to the rite? Did you prepare in any special way? What kind of commitment
did you make when you said Amen? Hughes invites the reader to speak the language of mystagogy and to unpack their own experience of our liturgical rites.

This is without a doubt the best book I have read recently. The succinct historical background information, the excellent theological reflection and rich images, stories and metaphors from the anecdotal material which Hughes has gathered make this an exciting and refreshing book to read.

It is highly recommended for all who prepare for and celebrate the sacraments. This may be the best textbook available for the formation of presiders and catechists and liturgy committees.

The Last Word
The Church’s Lost Treasure

Peter Novecosky

The need for reconciliation and forgiveness is a daily experience for all of us. And confession/sacramental reconciliation is a privileged way the Church offers us forgiveness. Indeed, it is the normal way for forgiveness of grave sin.

I suspect it is the belief of most Catholics that the only way to have any sin forgiven is by the sacrament of reconciliation. I suspect that this is what most other Christians believe is our practice too.

But sometimes we forget that sacramental confession is not the only way forgiveness of sins is experienced in the Church. Although devotional confessions have fallen off dramatically in recent years, for many decades the Church has emphasized the practice of regular devotional confession, even for the forgiveness of our "daily" or venial sins. This means that a treasured part of our heritage has been lost. We have stressed devotional confession so much that we have forgotten other traditional forms of forgiveness: the "non-sacramental" forms of forgiveness. I believe it is time to correct the balance in our teaching and our preaching.

Many Catholics will be surprised to find the following teachings in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC):

Alongside the radical purification brought about by baptism or martyrdom [the Fathers of the Church] cite as means of obtaining forgiveness of sins: efforts at reconciliation with one's neighbour, tears of repentance, concern for the salvation of one's neighbour, the intercession of the saints and the practice of charity 'which covers a multitude of sins' (CCC #1434).

[Perfect] contrition remits venial sins (CCC #1452).

And the eucharist also effects forgiveness of sins:

Daily conversion and penance find their source and nourishment in the Eucharist, for in it is made present the sacrifice of Christ which has reconciled us with God. Through the Eucharist those who live from the life of Christ are fed and strengthened (CCC, #1436).

It is a remedy to free us from our daily...
faults and to preserve us from mortal sins (Council of Trent, #1435).

The Eucharist cannot unite us to Christ without at the same time cleansing us from past sins and preserving us from future sins (CCC, #1393).

The Eucharist strengthens our charity and this living charity wipes away venial sins (Council of Trent, #1394).

St. Ambrose said, “If we proclaim the Lord’s death, we proclaim the forgiveness of sins. If, as often as his blood is poured out, it is poured for the forgiveness of sins, I should always receive it, so that it may always forgive my sins. Because I always sin, I should always have a remedy” (CCC, #1393).

There has been controversy about the use of general absolution in the Third Form of Reconciliation, most recently in Australia. It seems to me that a revival of the richness of non-sacramental forms for the forgiveness of “daily sins” and an appreciation of the eucharist for the forgiveness of sin would be a better route to go. It is part of our long Christian heritage and it has also been stressed by other Christian churches. Thus it would also have an ecumenical impact.

In his talks Pope John Paul II usually stresses the sacrament of reconciliation. However, in a recent talk (L’Osservatore Romano, March 24, 1999), he mentioned, but did not stress, the non-sacramental forms of forgiveness. “Venial sins can be also forgiven outside sacramental confession,” he said, “but it is certainly very good to confess them.” Moreover, he added, the faithful have the right “to go to confession and obtain sacramental absolution for venial sins alone.”

Non-sacramental forms of forgiveness for our daily sins should be taught and preached at every level. As noted above, these include efforts at reconciliation with one’s neighbour, tears of repentance, concern for the salvation of one’s neighbour, the intercession of the saints, perfect contrition, and the practice of charity which covers a multitude of sins.” The Catechism also reminds us that prayer, reading sacred scripture and every sincere act of worship or devotion contributes to the forgiveness of our sins (CCC #1437).

The practice of confession has undergone considerable change in the past decades. I believe it would be good for bishops, pastors, theologians, liturgists and lay people to explore more fully the rich teaching and practice of non-sacramental forms of forgiveness. It seems it’s something we have largely forgotten to emphasize. Bringing this gift back to our consciousness and practice would be very appropriate in this year in which we celebrate reconciliation.
Our Place of Worship

Whether it is for a renovation or a new construction, *Our Place of Worship* offers a process that a community may follow in developing its worship space. It also presents principles and characteristics of an appropriate place of worship and it outlines the requirements of the liturgy according to the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of Vatican II and the Introduction to the Roman Missal.

**Complete Resource**
This new resource contains five appendices and a bibliography, and comes with a separate leaflet that can be photocopied and handed out in parishes. It is an essential resource for diocesan offices, diocesan commissions on art and architecture, and diocesan or parish liturgy and building committees involved in building and renovation projects.

88 pages, 21.5 x 28 cm, saddle-stitched, (code 2-361) $12.95  ISBN 0-88997-441-1

User-Friendly Format
Numerous photographs accompany the text throughout the book. Complementary notes in the margins further enhance the text and bring out specific aspects of the topics treated.

Youth at Worship

*Youth at Worship* is intended to assist those who prepare and participate in liturgies that involve young people. While reinforcing the fundamental liturgical principles that properly guide all worship activities, the document indicates the areas where adaptation of practices and rituals will encourage participation and enable the symbols, word and gestures of the liturgy to speak more clearly.

This new resource describes and explains basic liturgical principles and illustrates them with a series of DOs and DON'Ts, such as:

"DO begin with hospitality, making sure all people are welcomed in the Christian assembly," and "DON'T tell young people they are the Church of the future while denying them a voice in the Church of today."


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