national bulletin on Liturgy

The 15-Minute RCIA Book
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1 Part II, Chapters 2 and 3 will not be addressed in this study.
2 Appendix 2 will not be addressed in this study.
About This Issue

The subtitle of this issue of the Bulletin could well be “A Guide for Busy People.” As in many current situations, it is the busy people who are asked to do things in parishes; they are the “do-ers.” God bless the busy people! Frequently too, it is the case that those doing the thing are so busy doing it that they have no time to sit down and read the instructions. It is our hope that in Bulletin #166 we are providing a tool that even busy people have time to use.

We have located the key paragraphs in each portion of the text of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and asked experts in the rite to comment on why these paragraphs are so significant, and to do so in such a way that even busy people, who may only have time in fifteen minutes snatches, may enrich their understanding of the ritual text that is such an integral and essential part of parish life. Discussion questions are included for personal reflection or for use by parish initiation teams and other interested groups.

Bulletin #166 will be useful for beginners with little hands-on experience with the rites. In addition, it will be an excellent tool for experienced veterans wishing to refresh themselves on the main points in the text, or as a self-test of their own familiarity with what the book really says.

Most readers will probably notice our avoidance of the acronym “RCIA” throughout this issue of the Bulletin (except, of course in our catchy title!). We have done this in recognition of the impact of language upon our thinking. Prolonged uncritical use of this acronym has allowed us to pigeonhole initiation, slow its integration into the fabric of parish (and diocesan) life, and impede its influence on the life of the Church. This has happened to such an extent that people have even invented an “RCIC” (for children) where no such thing exists in the Canadian ritual book. In many dioceses and parishes the implementation of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and the process of preparation of older children for baptism (as well as that for the completion of initiation for children baptized in infancy) is handled by separate personnel and governed by separate local legislation. We forget that Christian initiation is a unified process.

A second linguistic concern in this issue of the Bulletin is the use of the word “candidate.” Readers will soon notice that in most instances our writers add to that term a phrase describing exactly what the individuals are candidates for. It is not obvious from the Latin ritual text that there was any intent to create a new technical term consisting solely of that word; in fact there are places in the rite where the term is applied to the unbaptized.

For the convenience of readers outside Canada, two accommodations have been made.

- For readers in the US, the numbers of the equivalent paragraphs in the US edition are indicated in a footnote at the beginning of the article.
- For readers outside Canada and the US, the numbering of the Latin editio typica is offered in square brackets alongside the Canadian numbers wherever individual paragraphs are discussed.

A new regular feature is introduced in Bulletin #166. By popular demand we are introducing “Music Notes,” including music suggestions from Catholic Book of Worship III for specific Sundays and major celebrations. In this issue: the Sundays of Advent and the Sundays, solemnities and feasts of the Christmas Season.

Murray Kroetsch’s “Brief Book Reviews” are back again. The “Helpful Reading” section that often appears in the Bulletin has been omitted from this issue, but will re-appear in the next issue, which deals with pastoral implementation of the rite. Meanwhile, readers are encouraged to spend time with the ritual book, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.
The 15-Minute RCIA Book

Don't Skip This Part!

This is the article that tells about the layout of the liturgical book known as the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. It will tell you the purpose of the various parts of the book, how the parts fit together, how they differ from one another, and why it is important to know all this.

Foreword

The Foreword on p. v is written by James L. Doyle, bishop of Peterborough, president of the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy (the liturgical commission of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops) in 1987, when the present edition of the rite was introduced. As in the case of most such forewords, Bishop Doyle offers an encapsulated history of this edition of the rite. Note that even here paragraph 75 is identified as the key paragraph on the whole of the rite.

Contents

There is more to the two pages of Contents than titles and page numbers. The formatting of these pages gives an instant overview of the parts of the book and their relationship with one another.

Parts

On the Contents pages five titles are underlined; they represent major divisions within the book. It should be noted that each of these sections assumes—and therefore demands—that we have read those that come before. We should not use any of the rites of Part II without a thorough understanding of Part I. We should not use any of the rites in Appendices 1 and 3 without a thorough understanding of both Part I and Part II.

Rites and Periods

Under each underlined title on the Contents pages are two kinds of headings: all-caps headings and headings with standard capitalization. This variation in formatting indicates that there are two kinds of rites:

• in all-caps: rites that mark a change in the person's relationship with the Church; often referred to as "steps" (see chart on page 14) or "transition rites"; and

• in standard capitalization: rites celebrated during each period to assist the person in their spiritual formation.

Actually the contents page is more helpful than the chart on page 14, which in its formatting tends to downplay the importance of the rites during the periods.

The Contents pages also tell which rites in Part I are optional and by definition those that are not optional.

Editorial Note

To understand how the book is laid out to make it more user-friendly, look to the Editorial Note. It also explains all those little numerals and other marks in the margins.
Decree and Confirmation

While the Foreword comes from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Decree on p. x is from the Congregation for Divine Worship, the department of the Roman Curia that moderates liturgy. The Confirmation in the box at the bottom of the page affirms the Vatican’s formal approval of this edition of the rite, making it the official text for Canada and mandating its use.

Christian Initiation: General Introduction

The General Introduction on pp. xi–xv appears in the Rite of Baptism for Children. Because it is a “general” introduction, applicable to more than one form of the rites of initiation, it is numbered as a freestanding document. Paragraph numbering in the Introduction to the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults begins again at 1. So there are actually two introductions: one that is general and applies to all forms of initiation and one that is particular to this rite.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults: Introduction

The Introduction offers an overview of the process of initiation beginning with the structure of the process (4–8) and the roles of each of the ministries: people of God, sponsors, godparents, bishop, priests, deacons, and catechists (9–16). Sequence is always significant in a liturgical book. Items are always placed either in chronological sequence or in order of priority depending on the nature of the list. Notice that in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults the people of God are listed as the primary ministers and the description of their role occupies more space than any of the others.

The introduction also makes preliminary remarks about the proper time and place of celebration with additional comments about celebrating outside of these parameters (17–31).

Finally, as in all liturgical books, there are notes specifying who has authority to make adaptations (conferences of bishops, diocesan bishops, ministers) and what kind of adaptations each is authorized to make (32–35).

Notes and Ritual Texts

Most sections of the book include two kinds of texts:
• praenotanda (guidelines and pastoral notes), and
• ritual texts.

It is unwise and irresponsible to celebrate the rites without having a thorough knowledge of the praenotanda.

Matching People with the Path Intended for Them

The Contents section of the book both challenges and assists us to match the needs of individuals with the rites designed for them.

There are four sections that apply to the unbaptized:
• all of Part I - normative form for unbaptized persons,
• Part II Chapter 1 - adaptations for children of catechetical age,
• Part II Chapter 2 - abbreviated form for exceptional circumstances¹, and
• Part II Chapter 3 - special form for persons in danger of death.²

Notice that any abbreviation of the process requires the permission of the local bishop.³

¹ This segment of the rite is not dealt with in the current study.
² This segment of the rite is not dealt with in the current study.
³ See RCIA 307 [Latin 240].

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The rite envisions four categories of baptized persons:

- baptized uncatechized Catholics,
- baptized catechized Catholics,
- uncatechized candidates for reception into full communion, and
- catechized candidates for reception into full communion.

There are three sections that apply to the above listed baptized persons:

- Part II Chapter 4 - guidelines for preparation of uncatechized baptized persons for confirmation and eucharist,
- Part II Chapter 5 - guidelines and rites for Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church), and
- Appendix 3 - guidelines and optional rites prepared for use in Canada—according to pastoral need—during the period of formation of baptized persons—Catholics as well as those baptized in separated ecclesial communities).

Paragraph 75 of Part I describes a complete catechetical formation. It is the responsibility of the initiating community to determine the extent of formation of each person. Baptized persons—whether Catholic or not—need only be provided with whatever is lacking in their catechetical formation in preparation for the celebration of the rites suited to them.

**Dismissals**

In Canada catechumens, elect, and candidates for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church are to be dismissed from the Sunday assembly prior to the liturgy of the eucharist. (A specially worded dismissal is provided for candidates for reception into full communion.) However, baptized Catholics who are preparing to complete their initiation are not dismissed. Texts addressing each group are provided at the end of each rite.

**Combined Rites**

There is only one combined rite approved for use in Canada and it is used on only one occasion: the Celebration at the Easter Vigil of the Sacraments of Initiation and the Rite of Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church. In all other circumstances, parallel rites for the baptized and unbaptized do not take place within the same liturgy.

Thank you for not skipping this part!

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4 See RCIA 388 [US 474].
PART I: CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate

(36-40)

Catherine Ecker

If you only have time to read one paragraph ...

How does the Church respond when someone comes and asks about initiation? The question is often couched in a phrase such as, “What do I have to do to become a Catholic?” The answer to this question is found first and foremost in the ritual book: the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (CCCB, 1987) has information for all of the periods and the rites. The ritual book is comprehensive, providing information and pastoral guidance for bishops, pastors, deacons and catechists. Having sufficient time to study and absorb the pastoral notes can be a challenge.

If you have only a few moments to devote to broadening your understanding of how you can or how you are expected to respond to the question, “What do I have to do to become a Catholic?” please begin by reading paragraph 36:

Although the rite of initiation begins with admission to the catechumenate, the preceding period or precatechumenate is of great importance and as a rule should not be omitted. It is a time of evangelization: faithfully and constantly the living God is proclaimed and Jesus Christ whom he has sent for the salvation of all. Thus those who are not yet Christians, their hearts opened by the Holy Spirit, may believe and be freely converted to the Lord and commit themselves sincerely to him. For he who is the way, the truth, and the life fulfills all their spiritual expectations, indeed infinitely surpasses them.

From this introductory paragraph we realize that the precatechumenate is important. Often the prefix “pre” can lead us to believe that it is less important and not worthy of considerable time or energy. In the journey called initiation this is simply not true. The period is deemed of great importance. The text tells us why it is of great importance: the period of precatechumenate is a time of evangelization.

The word “evangelization” can either excite or dismay a catechist. Evangelization is not about providing answers to questions or distributing the program for becoming a Catholic. When we understand initiation as preparation for life in Christ, preparation for immersion into the paschal mystery, then evangelization is the obvious focus of the precatechumenate.

The focus of this first period is clear. We do not need to search for a definition of evangelization; it is given here. Imagine the excitement of “faithfully and constantly” proclaiming the living God. Imagine the joy of sharing with others the

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story of Jesus Christ, the one whom God has sent for the salvation of all. It seems that there is, after all, sufficient subject matter for this period of evangelization.

The inquirer is able to move forward in his or her journey when evangelization has occurred. It is the power of the Holy Spirit that enables us to open ourselves to the Lord.

Inquirers come with an abundance of lived experiences. Their own culture, families, traditions and customs already will have shaped their image of God. The catechist faithfully proclaims the good news that Jesus taught and invites the inquirers to reflect on, name, and share how they have heard and lived the good news. The personal stories of both inquirers and catechist will join together to reflect the majesty and wonder of our God.

Evangelization in the twenty-first century can be challenging, for many people believe they already know who God is and what God wants. However, the period of the precatechumenate faithfully and constantly proclaims the living God, a God who is God of all ages and all time. This proclamation will face obstacles, for the God of Jesus Christ is not always recognized in our own images of God or in the experience or perception of organized religion.

**Things People Often Miss**

The rite also guides us in discovering signs that evangelization has occurred. "From evangelization, completed with the help of God, come the faith and initial conversion that cause a person to feel called away from sin and drawn into the mystery of God's love" (37). The catechist will recognize initial conversion through listening to the stories and questions of the inquirer. As time passes the inquirer may begin to reflect a change in attitude or behaviour. For example, the catechist may hear stories that family conflict is diminishing or that relationships are smoother. The inquirer may speak of setting time aside to pray alone or with family members.

Attendance at the Sunday eucharist is a sign of desire to learn about a Catholic way of life.

An inquirer who is hearing the good news may realize that he or she needs to shift priorities. Reflecting on the meals that Jesus shared with his friends and the outcast may move inquirers to shift family practices. For example, television will no longer hold a place of prominence during family meals because conversation at the table is being introduced. The catechist must be able to listen to the inquirer with openness and without prejudice to detect and name some of the signs of conversion. One danger is to believe that the signs of conversion are restricted or limited to "religious" activities. The changes may be subtle or dramatic, for conversion is a gradual process.

It is the initial conversion that moves the catechist to recognize that the inquirer is ready to move forward and to celebrate the first rite in the journey of initiation, The Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens.

Jesus came to proclaim the good news to all people; Jesus saves us in community. For catechist and inquirer alike this is welcome news. During the period of the precatechumenate the inquirer receives support from families and other groups of Christians (38). The larger parish community is involved in this period of formation; the initiation team or catechist will seek out families or individuals who exhibit the gift of hospitality and invite them to meet with one or more of the inquirers. These meetings should be informal, often in a home while sharing a meal and fellowship.

**Other Comments**

The Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate is informal with no set length or structure. This means that when someone first approaches the parish seeking information we are to be welcoming. Recognizing this period as a time of evangelization assists us in welcoming and
meeting with the inquirer when he or she arrives. There is no set curriculum, so there is no danger of someone missing an important session if she or he joins a group of inquirers who have been meeting for a period of time. Conversion is gradual; it does not occur according to a predetermined schedule. Some inquirers will be ready to celebrate the first rite while others are still engaged in the period of evangelization. Our God is a God of all people and all time. Do we think that God is incapable of being present to people even though they are in various stages of the journey?

Those who come seeking an answer to the question, “How do I become a Catholic?” are fairly representative of the general population. We must remember that some of these people are baptized and already share life in Christ. For these people the period of evangelization may be quite different. A baptized person will never celebrate the Rite of Acceptance and may never become a catechumen.

It would be inhospitable to treat all inquirers in the same way. Yet, candidates for reception into full communion or candidates for completion of initiation—the baptized—may not have heard the story of our living God. Indeed, they may yet to meet the risen Lord and hear the good news. This good news is shared, still recognizing that these people have already been configured to Christ in his dying and rising through the waters of baptism. The permanence of baptism definess the evangelization of candidates for reception into full communion and candidates for completion of initiation.

The candidates for reception into full communion may be approaching the Catholic Church after living an active Christian life for years. These candidates should not become part of the period of evangelization; their journey will not resemble that of others. Part II, chapter 5 provides a simple and clear path for such candidates.

Paragraph 36 lays the foundation and focus for this period. We need not be concerned with timetables and required reading. The work of this period is in proclaiming the living God and Jesus Christ whom God has sent for the salvation of all. This work is accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit. God is wonderful!

Discussion Questions
1. In your parish how are enquirers welcomed: in Ordinary Time, in Advent, in Lent, in Eastertime?
2. How could the larger parish community in which you minister be encouraged and enabled to become involved in the Period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate?
3. How are candidates for reception into full communion welcomed in your community?
4. How are candidates for completion of initiation welcomed in your community?
Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens

(41–74)

Catherine Ecker

If you only have time to read one paragraph ...

"The rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens is of the utmost importance. ... [T]he celebration manifests their [inquirers] desire publicly and marks their reception and first consecration by the Church. ... From this time on the Church embraces the catechumens as its own with a mother's love and concern" (41, 47).

The rite of initiation begins with admission to the order of catechumens; however, celebrating this rite is different from signing up for a new course at the local college. In the ritual book we read: "Joined to the Church, the catechumens are now part of the household of Christ, since the Church nourishes them with the word of God and sustains them by means of liturgical celebrations" (47). Becoming a member of the order of catechumens is a profound act. The rite of acceptance is the first step on the path to the waters of baptism. We cannot undertake this step lightly.

The Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens is celebrated only with the unbaptized. This rite changes the inquirer and is of utmost importance both in the life of the inquirer and the life of the Church. If two catechumens marry or if a catechumen marries an unbaptized person there are particular rites to be followed. Perhaps the most dramatic sign of the radical nature of this rite is that if a catechumen dies, he or she receives Christian burial. Clearly, preparation and discernment are necessary before the rite of acceptance is celebrated.

Some inquirers who come seeking to hear the story of salvation, the good news of Jesus Christ, may be baptized; such baptized seekers may not celebrate this rite (43). Baptized inquirers are known as candidates for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church or candidates for confirmation and eucharist. The rites that mark their journey are found in Part II, Chapters 4 and 5 and, in the Canadian rite, in Appendix 3.

Things People Often Miss

God works independently of our schedules and day timers; we cannot predetermine when an inquirer or a group of inquirers will be ready to celebrate the rite of acceptance. There is no predetermined time to celebrate this liturgical step. The text allows for the establishment of two (or even three) dates as the usual times for carrying out this rite (18). References to support a local practice of celebrating the rite of acceptance on the first Sunday of Advent cannot be found in the rite. The practice of setting two or three dates during the liturgical year would suggest that the dates are during Ordinary Time and not during a season of preparation (Lent and Advent) or a festive season (Easter and Christmas). In a parish where inquirers arrive and are welcomed throughout the year it is likely that more than one celebration of the rite of acceptance will be scheduled during the liturgical year. The liturgical cycle, the readings of the day, the local parish calendar and the readiness of the inquirers will all play a role in determining the most appropriate time for celebrating the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens.
The Heart of the Action

In the rite of acceptance the inquirers are met, greeted in a friendly manner, and asked to declare their name and to state what they ask of God’s Church. It is the inquirer who declares his/her own readiness to accept the gospel as a way of life; then the sponsors and assembly are asked to declare their readiness to accompany the inquirers.

The signing of the inquirers with the cross is a powerful moment in the rite. The rite allows for the signing of the senses (56) in addition to the forehead. Including the signing of the senses is formative. The words that accompany the signing of the senses convey the breadth and depth of walking as one who is following Christ. The act of the signing of the senses is often the role of the sponsor; the presider recites the text while the sponsor signs the senses. For the signing to convey the weight of the words, the sponsor must be prepared in advance and instructed to use large gestures and actually touch the person while signing. For example, the sponsor will trace the cross with an open hand, on the person’s ears, with a slow deliberate gesture; their open palm will touch the ears of the catechumen. We are sensual beings.

The celebration of the rite is not limited to listening and looking. Taking full advantage of the rite and including sung acclamations by the assembly throughout the signing of the senses is important.

The signing of the senses concludes with a prayer and an invitation to celebrate God’s Word. The liturgy of the word begins once all have reached their places. It is proper to proclaim the readings of the day.

The rite allows for the conference of bishops to introduce additional rites for particular regions, including the giving of a new name (58, 59, and 69–74). The optional rites are celebrated only in exceptional circumstances in Canada.

Pastoral Wisdom for Celebrating

For those experienced in celebrating infant baptism, recalling the first part of the Rite of Baptism for Children assists in preparing for and celebrating the rite of acceptance. The similarities are striking. The parents are asked the child’s name and asked what they ask of God’s Church. The parents and godparents are questioned as to their own readiness and the children are claimed for Christ by the sign of the cross.

Preparing

Presiders and Catechists

The first step in preparing to celebrate the rite is reading the ritual book. The notes preceding the rite are essential. In particular read and reread 41–74. The temptation is to simply read the outline of the rite and the text printed in black ink; however, the parts of the rite written in red ink are vital since they explain how the rite is to be celebrated and note the options available.

Preparing to celebrate a liturgical rite is much different from putting together a piece of furniture. Some people are tempted to open the box that the piece of furniture arrives in, look at all the parts and try to sort out how they fit together. There seems to be a badge of honour connected to not reading the instructions and directions, hoping the pieces all fit together. This is definitely not the way to celebrate a liturgical rite. Do not ignore the instructions and hope for the best! Unlike the piece of furniture, we cannot stop a rite and undo what has happened if we do not like the way it is beginning to look.

Preparing to celebrate the rite means that there will be no need to explain what is happening while it is happening. Large gestures, vibrant acclamations and audible responses all reflect the meaning of the
rite. This is an encounter with our living God and no definition is adequate.

**Sponsors**
When preparing to celebrate the rite it is necessary to meet with the sponsors to prepare them for the flow and direction of the rite. It is not helpful to include inquirers in this session for they become concerned with where to stand or sit and may fail to enter into the celebration. Both inquirers and sponsors prepare for the rite through prayer, guided reflection and directed discussion. This preparation cannot be ignored.

**Celebrating Who?**
This rite is celebrated with the inquirers, sponsors and members of the entire Christian community. The presider is a priest or deacon. Often it is most appropriate for the pastor to be the presider. As a parish becomes accustomed to celebrating the rite of acceptance throughout the liturgical year the community will feel at ease with its role and participate actively.

**When?**
It is appropriate for the rite to be celebrated within the Sunday liturgy. The rite begins immediately after the opening hymn and greeting, and flows into the liturgy of the word. Following the homily the rite continues, concluding with the dismissal of the catechumens; the liturgy of the eucharist follows.

**Where?**
The design of each parish church will determine the most suitable place for the inquirers, presider and sponsors throughout the rite. Remember that the inquirers are not part of a play or stage production. The celebration of the liturgy happens throughout the worship space, not simply at the ‘front of the church’. Movement throughout the rite is both acceptable and necessary. The inquirers and sponsors will require a microphone (hand held or remote).

**Presentation of a Bible**
Following the homily the catechumens may be presented with the gospel. The use of the word “presentation” can be misleading. Although it is possible and perhaps desirable to present a copy of the New Testament or a bible to the catechumens it seems most appropriate to present the actual text outside the liturgy. A catechist may want to arrange for the parish to purchase copies of the bible (NRSV) or the New Testament to present to the catechumens, the candidates for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church and the candidates for completion of initiation. It may be possible to ask various parish groups to cover the cost of these bibles. The actual presentation of the text is most suited to a catechetical session.

We know that during the liturgy of the word we are hearing God’s word proclaimed in our midst. We know that Christ is truly present and that we are encountering the amazing and wonderful deeds and acts that God has done and is continuing to do in our midst. The life that flows from the word of God cannot be contained on paper and bound into a book. Handing a book, even a bible, to the catechumen implies that the word of God is static. We know this is not true.

Placing the hands of each catechumen on the pages of the lectionary open to the readings of the day while saying, “Receive the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God,” (54), has a different meaning from presenting a book for personal reading. This action will speak to the catechumen and the assembly. We will not need to explain what meaning the word has in our lives. We can touch, feel and be formed, transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ. This “presentation” using the parish lectionary during the rite will also prepare catechumens and the assembly for the dismissal and breaking open of God’s word.

**Dismissal**
The intercessions for the catechumens follow the presentation and then the
Period of the Catechumenate

(75–80)

Gerry Copeman

If you only have time to read one paragraph ...

Consult paragraph 75. Here you will find directives that address what the period of the catechumenate is intended to accomplish and how it is designed to make that happen. Paragraph 75 of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is the normative text for the catechumenate and outlines the process mandated by the conference of bishops.

The first directive we receive in paragraph 75 is that “the catechumenate is an extended period.” Perhaps for some, Advent to Easter seems like an extended amount of time; but in the reality of one’s life journey it is but a brief interlude. Nowhere in the text is the “extended period” defined, but most certainly nowhere is it identified with Advent to Easter. The intent of the Church is that those who are preparing for baptism, or by extension those seeking the full communion of the Catholic Church who are not catechized, should be provided with the full time necessary for true faith to take hold and real conversion to happen. This extended period could last from one to three years depending on the individual person on the journey. It must be understood that the minimum experience envisioned by the rite is that one would live the catechumenal period for at least one full liturgical year during which the many facets of the Christian message would be encountered.

The second principle offered in paragraph 75 clarifies why the period of the catechumenate needs to be an extended one. Catechumens (and candidates for the full communion of the Catholic Church) are to be “given suitable pastoral formation and guidance aimed at training them in the Christian life.” Clearly the rite is insis-
tent upon the purpose of the process: formation. In contrast, many parish programs that use the term “Christian Initiation” seem more concerned with providing information rather than formation. If the process of initiation is perceived to be solely about providing teachings concerning what Catholics believe, one can accomplish it through offering a series of lectures, providing catechisms for personal reading, and giving instructions on how Catholics worship and celebrate. However, information is very different from formation; the latter is concerned not with what one knows, but with how one lives the meaning of what one has discovered to be true. Information is about grasping intellectually the teachings provided; formation requires conversion to a new way of life based on an individual's free choice to embrace the newfound truth. In its wisdom the Church recognizes that each person's journey to conversion will be unique; no one pre-determined time frame can guarantee authentic conversion. Time is of the essence: not our time to accomplish the task, but the catechumen's time required to grow in faith. Bear in mind that atheists can know all that the Church teaches to be true without believing one iota of it. So too can catechumens and candidates for full communion know the teachings but fail to incorporate them into their lived experience.

A third principle contained in paragraph 75 is that at the time of their acceptance into the catechumenate period of their formation they already have a rudimentary disposition and fundamental faith in God revealed in the Church and that this new period of their lives will focus on deepening that faith through which they will be “brought to maturity.” How this happens is described in paragraph 75.1–4.

**Things People Often Miss**

The catechesis provided during this period is to be gradual and complete in its coverage, accommodated to the liturgical year, and solidly supported by celebrations of the word. Each year the Church embarks on a liturgical cycle beginning with the First Sunday of Advent and ending with the Feast of Christ the King. On each of the Sundays in between, a new facet of the Christian mystery of salvation is offered for mystagogical homiletic reflection. Each Sunday provides a challenge for growth. Each Sunday proclaims deeper insight into the mission of Jesus. Each Sunday offers insight into the doctrines of faith. If indeed the process of formation is to be complete, a year-round ongoing process must be provided.

In addition, this paragraph of the rite directs us to a further component of formation: the example of sponsors, godparents, and the entire Christian community helps “the catechumens learn to turn more readily to God in prayer, to bear witness to the faith, in all things to keep their hopes set on Christ, to follow supernatural inspiration in their deeds and to practice love of neighbour.” Faith to be communicated and deepened needs to be faith modeled and mentored. The journey should never be a private one separated from the life of a Christian community. Just as congregations of religious sisters, brothers and priests form new members through postulancy and novitiates that allow matured members to inspire new ones through example, so too are parish communities called upon to mentor those in formation.

The whole of the parish is called to be the primary catechist for those preparing for the Easter sacraments or reception into full communion. To attempt to form people separately from the community is to reduce the experience to that of a private encounter between the individual and a transcendent God. The Christian God is one who, in Christ Jesus, entered into human history and is discovered in the stories of people called into discipleship. Formation demands the involvement of the community and the public identification of those journeying with the established community.
The task is not merely to teach what the mission of the Church is, but to demonstrate what living the mission looks like. It is by example that we teach. Paragraph 75.2 goes on to identify the ultimate goal of the process: “... they pass from the old to a new nature made perfect in Christ. Since this transition brings with it a progressive change of outlook and conduct, it should become manifest by means of its social consequences and it should develop gradually during the period of the catechumenate.” The word “gradually” is not to be taken lightly. What we are about is fundamental change within an individual; from personal experience we should know that change takes time—often much time. Providing the time for this change to happen is part of the agenda of the initiation process.

To take all this seriously, we need to embrace the image of Church offered in paragraph 75.3. We as Church are to be “like a mother” who “helps the catechumens.” No mother expects a newborn child to have the maturity of an adult or teenagers the wisdom of elders. Nor does she expect each child in the family to have the same personality or needs. Like a mother, we are called to embrace with love and patience each one who comes seeking faith and membership in Christ’s Church. Like a mother, we need to develop the spirit of trust that with time all can eventually mature in faith and grow into the mystery and mission of Christ.

Paragraph 75.4 stresses that the formation process must offer the catechumens the opportunity to “learn to work actively with others to spread the Gospel and build up the Church by the witness of their lives and by professing their faith.” Here we discover that the goal of conversion and formation is discipleship. Those to be received into the fullness of the mystery of Christ are to be received into his mission: bringing good news to the world and contributing to the coming of the reign of God. Long before celebrating the Easter sacraments each one needs to be engaged already in apostolic activity and through this learn firsthand what it feels like to be a disciple. Without the lived experience of faith in action, how can anyone validate what is glimpsed to be true?

Other Comments

Number 76 of the text reminds us further that the work of formation is dependant on the grace of God and on various circumstances affecting the duration of the process. “Nothing,” says the rite, “can be settled a priori.” Humbling though it may be, we must confess that we cannot control God’s activity in the life of another. True conversion occurs in God’s good time, if indeed we remain open to the mystery as it unfolds.

In number 78 we are reminded that the objective of formation is not simply that of presenting Catholic teaching in its entirety; it must also enlighten faith, move hearts towards God, foster liturgical participation and apostolic activity, and nurture lives completely in accord with the Spirit of Christ.

As we accept the responsibility for guiding another in the process of formation, we need to understand that we are fostering the development of that person into something new. Our attention must be focused on the whole of that person’s life and not simply on the intellect. When we affirm the preciousness of each person entrusted to us, then we will know that each one must be treated as a unique individual and that for each the journey will be different.

Discussion Questions

1. Using a calendar, count the weeks between the First Sunday of Advent and Ash Wednesday of the current year. How much can we reasonably expect to accomplish in that period of time: “an appropriate acquaintance” with dogmas and precepts, “a profound sense” of the mystery of salvation, familiarity with the Christian way of life, celebration of liturgical rites, and integration into the community and its apostolic work in the world?
2. How can we help inquirers understand why the process of “becoming Catholic” will take at least one full liturgical year?
3. How will a variety of parishioners be involved in the formation process outside the liturgical rites?
4. How are catechumens brought to an awareness that this journey is about living as a Catholic, not simply being Catholic?
5. After careful consideration of all the elements that are essential to the period of the catechumenate, are catechumens in your community being offered formation or information?

Rites Belonging to the Period of the Catechumenate:

Celebrations of the Word of God, Minor Exorcisms, Blessings, and Anointings (81-102)

Catherine Ecker

Celebrations of the Word

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, the normative text for the formation of catechumens and candidates for full communion, directs us in numbers 81 to 84 to provide for celebrations of God’s word during the catechumenate period. The text insists that these celebrations provide the basis upon which formation is structured. Three kinds of celebrations are called for: those held especially for the catechumens, the liturgy of the word at Sunday eucharist, and those held in connection with catechetical instruction. What should be clear for us is that the Church sees the word of God as the core element for formation during the catechetical period. No other program or text can, nor should, substitute for it.

If you only have time to read one paragraph ...

Number 82 offers some insights into celebrations of the word arranged specifically for catechumens. Notice that our attention is directed first to the hearts of those receiving the Church’s teaching. By focusing on the heart rather than on the intellect, the Church wants us to understand that mere intellectual ascent to a teaching does not guarantee true belief in what is being affirmed. Knowing something to be true, and making that truth a part of one’s life are not necessarily the same thing. It is by living what we know to be true that we demonstrate true acceptance.

Reflection on the celebrations of God’s word seeks to help catechumens appropriate into their lives the meaning of God’s revealed truth. The process is one of conversion, and is rooted in the proclamation of sacred scripture, particularly the New Testament. These celebrations address the moral teachings of Jesus, his call to forgiveness and mercy, the reality of sin and the need for repentance, and the mission of Jesus entrusted to the disciples so that the reign of God might come into our world.
These themes should be seen by catechists as forming the core of the formation process. It is these understandings that catechumens are called to make their own.

The wisdom contained in paragraph 82.1 is this: the catechumenal process is a journey into the depths of one's being where truth can be embraced and made one's own. It is not sufficient to accept a teaching based on another's articulation of it; the teaching must be embraced because one has come to know from personal experience that it is indeed true.

**Things People Often Miss**

A second dimension of these particular celebrations of the word is given in 82.2: to give instruction and experience in different aspects and ways of prayer. By directing us to the question of prayer we are reminded that the task at hand is not preaching, exegesis, or form criticism. Celebrations of the word are not scripture studies but opportunities for the word to lead us into intimacy with God, revealed in Christ Jesus. Like the early disciples we are called to come to know Jesus, to put on his mind and heart, and to do what he did. We are called to live his life as we become ever more one with him. Through reflection on God’s word and by learning how to converse with God in prayer, this intimacy grows and conversion enhanced.

Paragraph 82.3 reminds us that our lives are cyclical, as is the liturgical year. Celebrations of the word need to reflect that pattern of life. Over and over again as we progress along the way, we are called into the mystery of dying and rising, of becoming ever new. Celebrations offer catechists and homilists the opportunity to witness to the truth of the human condition and the activity of God in our lives.

Paragraph 82.4 reminds us that when the Easter sacraments have been celebrated and those with whom we have been journeying are full members of the Church, they are to take a regular and active place in the weekly assemblies of God’s people for the rest of their lives. By our introducing them to God’s word in a gradual and prayerful way, they will come to discover its importance for their lives and develop a longing to continue their experience of it.

**Other Comments**

One note needs to be made in relation to paragraph 83, which suggests that catechumens be introduced gradually to the Sunday assembly. This paragraph is addressed particularly to those living in non-Christian cultures where Christianity and its Sunday assembly would not be familiar experiences. For us in North America, the presumption should be that those who seek to join the Church already are familiar with our worship and are indeed participating in it on a regular basis. It should also be presumed that each Sunday catechumens are being nourished by the proclamation of the scriptures and the homily, and are deepening their grasp of its meaning for them during the time following their dismissal from the assembly.

Finally, paragraph 84 directs us to remember that catechetical or instruction meetings should occur in the context of prayer and that the word of God that is celebrated on those occasions forms the basis of that prayer.

Paragraphs 85–89 offer a model of a celebration of the word.

During the journeying of catechumens along the path leading to the Rite of Election and the celebration of the Easter sacraments, the Church, in its desire to assist and prepare them for God’s activity in their lives, provides several experiences through which their hearts and minds may be opened. These are celebrations of exorcism, blessings and anointings.

**Minor Exorcisms**

Notes on the minor exorcisms begin at paragraph 90 and direct our attention to the reality that it is God who is the one who is the initiator of what is happening in the lives of those preparing for baptism. (The baptized do not undergo exorcism nor are they anointed with the oil of cate-
chumens; prayers for strength during the formation period of the already baptized are provided in paragraphs 490-491 of the Canadian rite.) Clearly, the intent here is to lead those on the journey to recognize that the goal of the process is not the sacraments to be celebrated but rather the new life into which they are being called. The purpose of the rite of exorcism is to help name and surrender all that is in contradiction to the Christian way of life in response to God's grace and power.

**The Heart of the Action**

Again we must understand that the Church proclaims that the agent for this conversion into the Christian life is God and that it is incumbent upon us to make the activity of God available to those we are accompanying. Paragraph 90 points us to the challenges placed before catechumens: learning to live the Christian life; the struggle between flesh and spirit; the need for self-denial in order to attain the kingdom of God; the acknowledgement of their dependency on God.

The Christian life into which they are being called needs to be understood in the context of the mission of the Church. We need to focus their attention on the responsibilities entrusted to the Church by Jesus so that his mission might be brought to completion. Their journey then is not to sacraments and ritual, but to the work of the gospel, to proclaim good news in our world and to engage in the quest for justice for all. Exorcism celebrated in that context challenges catechumens to confess their participation in the sin of the world in which they live and help move their hearts to change.

Obviously it is essential for us who journey with catechumens to understand exactly into what we are initiating them. Indeed it is into the Church that we are preparing to welcome them, but it is the “Church as mission” not solely the Church of worship that is the ultimate goal. Further because they are being prepared for mission, their lives must as best as possible be free to authentically participate in it.

A word or two seems necessary in relation to paragraph 90’s choice of language. It must be read from a biblical perspective rather than from the sentiment of later Christian piety. Jesus, as a Jewish person living under Roman domination, would have understood that the kingdom of God is intended for this world and that the whole of the person is called to participate in it. We need to know that it is the whole person, not just the spirit of the person who is being called by God into the Church. Consequently it is every dimension of the person that stands in need of conversion into Christ.

**Pastoral Wisdom for Celebrating**

The exorcisms may be celebrated by priests and deacons, or by catechists who have been appointed by the bishop. Pastors should request this from the bishop for (at least some of) the catechists involved in the process of initiation, assuring him that they are properly prepared to celebrate these rites.

Part of the preparation of those who preside at these rites should focus on their understanding the reality of sin as both personal and social. They must clearly avoid seeing the rite in the context of demonic possession. What is to be exorcized is the spirit of evil, which can permeate into the fabric of our lives in opposition to the Spirit of Jesus. By naming what needs to change, choices can be made to avoid evil and choose what is truly good.

**Blessing of Catechumens**

A second ritual is provided for use during the catechumenate: that of blessing those on the journey. Paragraph 95 encourages those who are responsible for the formation process to act in the name of the Church, revealing God’s love and the community’s tender care.

While preparing for the eventual celebration of the Easter sacraments, catechumens are nonetheless members of the Church, having become so when they...
were accepted into the order of the catechumenate. As such they have a right to be ministered to, to experience and become sensitive to the activity of God in their lives. While the graces of the sacraments are unique and particularly power-filled, blessings provide catechumens with the experience of God's care for them and assist them in awakening to the power of the Church's ministry of love.

The Heart of the Action
Blessings are not simply opportunities for catechumens to be perfunctorily signed with the cross. What is intended in this rite is that they be blessed with gifts from God mediated through the activity of the Church. Paragraph 95 names several of the gifts (courage, joy, and peace) that blessings can impart. No doubt there are many more and each catechumen may require specific ones according to their need and struggle on the road to conversion.

Pastoral Wisdom for Celebrating
The Church envisions that the blessing be given at the conclusion of a celebration of the word and identifies the minister as a priest, deacon or qualified catechist appointed by the bishop. In times of special need these blessings may also be celebrated privately with individual catechumens.

To omit the blessings from the period of the catechumenate both prevents the Church from ministering to those in the process and risks suggesting to them that the activity of God is limited only to sacraments. As they are blessed with specific gifts from God they can learn to be those blessings for others.

Interestingly the minor exorcisms and blessings are included with celebrations of the word of God as being constitutive of the period of the catechumenate. The presumption then is that all three would be celebrated as opportunities and needs arise. An optional rite that may also be included in the catechumenal period is that of anointing.

Anointing of the Catechumens
In paragraph 98 we discover that when it appears beneficial or desirable a priest or deacon may anoint catechumens with the oil specifically blessed for this purpose. Each year during the Mass of Chrism the bishop blesses the oil of catechumens along with oil for the sick and the sacred chrism used in celebrating baptism, confirmation and ordination. In a public declaration to the gathered diocesan Church, the bishop indicates that on their journey catechumens will experience the gift of wisdom and that through these rites they will find strength to remain open and faithful to the activity of God working in their lives.

The Heart of the Action
The prayer that forms part of the ritual implores God to help those being anointed to open themselves to the Spirit of grace as they move towards joining God's priestly people.

Pastoral Wisdom for Celebrating
The intention here is that the rite of anointing be celebrated several times during the period of the catechumenate and not simply on the day of their baptism as if it were merely a ritual to be done in the process of that celebration. The Church understands the power contained in anointing and wishes that grace be bestowed on catechumens.

The ritual directs that these anointings follow the homily in a celebration of the word; it also allows for private anointings for particular necessities. The communal form is, of course, the preferable one for it engages the Church assembled for the rite. The Church into which catechumens will be initiated is the Church called upon to minister to them on their journey.

For a pastoral reason, or if oil blessed by the bishop is not available, a priest may choose to bless the oil to be used in anointing catechumens; a prayer of blessing is provided in the rite.
Liturgical Rites within the Formation Process

It should by now be clear that the period of the catechumenate calls for more than simply passing on Church teaching and biblical insight. At play is the formation of people into disciples of Christ. It is incumbent upon those charged with formation to provide a variety of experiences that respond to the needs of each one entrusted to their care.

Discussion Questions

1. How often do liturgically shaped celebrations of the word play a part in the formation of catechumens in your community? What liturgical elements are included?
2. How are catechumens invited and assisted to open their hearts to the word of God?
3. How are catechumens assisted to hear the word of God as good news rather than religious teachings or mere history?
4. Is there any reason why, in your local culture, catechumens may not be expected to be a part of the weekly Sunday assembly?
5. Under what circumstances would you decide to celebrate a minor exorcism rather than a blessing or anointing?
6. Under what circumstances would you decide to celebrate a blessing rather than a minor exorcism or anointing?
7. Under what circumstances would you decide to celebrate an anointing rather than a blessing or minor exorcism?
8. Are there people readily available throughout the catechumenate who are appointed by the bishop to preside at the celebration of these rites?

National Meeting of Diocesan Directors and Chairpersons of Liturgy Commissions

As announced in the last issue of the Bulletin, a national meeting of diocesan directors and chairpersons of liturgy commissions will be held at Mount St. Vincent Motherhouse, Halifax, NS, beginning on Monday, November 12, 2001 and concluding on Thursday, November 15, 2001. The purpose of this national conference is to assess what we have done with the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults in the years since its introduction. We invite those responsible for the implementation of the rite, i.e., liturgists, catechists, parish and diocesan leaders, to participate.

Our facilitators Mr. Jim Schellman and Sr. Sheila O'Dea of the North American FORUM on the Catechumenate will take us on a journey through our theme Initiating Adults: Present Realities and Future Challenges.

For further information and registration please contact
Dorothy Riopelle, National Liturgy Office, 90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, ON K1N 7B1
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Election or Enrollment of Names (105–124)

Gerry Copeman

About the Notes (105–115)

When it is discerned that one or more of the catechumens are ready to celebrate the sacraments of initiation, they are moved from the catechumenate by the celebration of the Rite of Election. This celebration usually is held on the First Sunday of Lent or on another day close to the beginning of that season.

If you only have time to read one paragraph ...

Read paragraph 107 [Latin 23] carefully. There is a definite presumption that those being called to celebrate the Rite of Election have undergone profound conversion of thought and life-style, and that they have sufficient familiarity with the teachings of Christ. Because of who they have become in response to God’s grace, the Church calls or “elects” them to ready themselves to publicly express their desire to receive the Easter sacraments as well as to live the meaning of them each day.

Things People Often Miss

It is essential to understand that the Rite of Election is celebrated not because it is the beginning of Lent, but because there are catechumens ready for the celebration. In other words, there is no reason to celebrate election if there is no one to be called, and only those who are to have undergone true conversion are to be called. This point only makes sense if the catechumenal process is not modeled on the academic year. Only in an on-going process, one in which conversion is truly taken seriously, can the Rite of Election be authentically what it is intended to be. If all in the catechumenate are called automatically to election as Lent begins, what place is there for discernment to ensure that conversion has occurred? The intention of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is for a process to be offered through which catechumens eventually grow into disciples of Christ. It is clearly not the intention that the process be designed so as to move everyone to the Easter sacraments simply because Easter is upon us.

The Rite of Election is about naming those who are ready to assume the responsibilities of living the Christian life and participating in the mission of the Church. Paragraph 109 [Latin 23, 137] directs priests, deacons and catechists involved in formation, along with sponsors and godparents, to ensure that the call to election is indeed an honest one, based on the true readiness of those chosen. Simply to move all catechumens through the Rite of Election towards initiation as a matter of routine is to betray what election means. In the rite the Church publicly proclaims its choice of those presented and accepts the testimony of those who speak for their suitability. To testify to someone’s readiness without having discerned that they are indeed so is to misunderstand this crucial step in the process of initiation. Such a practice also asks the assembly to affirm and accept what may not be true. Only those adequately prepared and sufficiently converted to the gospel are to be called in this rite.

1 Readers in the US, see US ritual book 118–137.
2 References to the Latin editio typica are provided for readers using an edition other than that of Canada or the USA.
Other Comments
A further dimension of election also needs to be understood. During the celebration each catechumen is asked to proclaim that his/her faith is such as to allow a free intention to receive the sacraments of initiation. The rite calls for an honest statement of intent from each. The ability to make such a commitment must be part of the discernment process.

The primary guide to discerning the readiness of catechumens is to be found in paragraph 75 of the rite. Questions that could help determine readiness include: Are they people of prayer? Do they witness to their faith in their lives? Are they people of hope? Are they optimistic about God's action in them and in the world? Do they seek God's guidance in choices they make? Do they show true love of neighbour? Do they have an appropriate acquaintance with the teachings of Christ and his Church? Do they have a profound sense of the mystery of salvation in their lives?

Because those called to celebrate the Rite of Election are being admitted to the sacraments of the Church universal and not simply into a parish community, the rite is celebrated by the bishop or by a priest delegated by the bishop to preside in his name.

About the Ritual Texts (116–124)
Following the homily preached by the bishop or his delegate, those to be called to the sacraments of initiation are presented to him. The Rite of Election is only for the unbaptized; in Canada, to avoid the appearance of triumphalism, the Call to Lenten Renewal is celebrated at the parish level separately from the Rite of Election, even if the Rite of Election too is celebrated at the parish level. In that presentation it is proclaimed that they themselves are asking to be allowed to participate in those sacraments (117 [Latin 143]). The bishop then announces to the assembly the readiness of each, doing so on the testimony he has received from the communities in which they have been prepared. He then asks their godparents to publicly state their opinion for all to hear.

The Heart of the Action
When we reflect on what the bishop asks, we understand the seriousness of the rite and the absolute necessity for honestly and diligently determining readiness. The bishop questions the godparents saying: “As God is your witness, do you consider these candidates worthy ... ?” (118 [Latin 144, 145]). Calling on God to witness the reply clearly moves the question from mere ceremony to deep meaning. This is serious stuff. The bishop further asks whether those presented have been attentive to God’s word proclaimed by the Church; whether their lives have been changed by it; and if they are active members of the communities to which they belong and are present to the community’s prayer life.

After asking the catechumens to state publicly their desire to become full members of the Church, the bishop invites them to offer their names for enrollment. Paragraph 119 [Latin 146] provides a variety of ways in which this can be done; the usual manner is for each to sign the Book of the Elect. The statement by the bishop following this enrollment declares them to be members of the elect, chosen to be initiated at Easter.

Pastoral Wisdom for Celebrating
The liturgical action that celebrates election presumes a number of things:
• those seeking election and the sacraments of initiation do so of their own free will;
• the communities from which they come, as well as those who have journeyed with them in their formation, testify that they are indeed formed according to the Church’s intention;
• godparents testify before God that the above testimony is true;
• the catechumens sign their names indicating their intention and their response to God’s call; and
the bishop declares them to be chosen for the Easter sacraments, indicating that what they will celebrate are the sacraments which belong to the Church. No one takes them to themselves but each is called by God through the Church to participate in them.

All of this should help us understand the significance of the formation process. As we understand the seriousness of the undertaking that catechumens will be asked to assume at the time of their call to sacraments, so too will we understand the seriousness of the ministry of formation entrusted to us.

Discussion Questions
1. In your community how is the decision to call catechumens to the sacraments of initiation made?
2. Who is involved in the decision to call catechumens to the sacraments of initiation?
3. How important is it for the bishop to celebrate this rite? Why or why not?
4. If it is impossible for the bishop to celebrate the rite with all the elect of the diocese, what alternatives do you propose?
5. Do you, in a non-ritual setting, ask godparents the questions that the bishop will ask them at the rite of election?
6. How does one ensure that catechumens understand what they are undertaking when they state publicly their desire to become full members of the Church?
7. In your community are all candidates routinely called to the sacraments the first time the Rite of Election comes around?
8. How is the distinction between the Rite of Election and the Rite of Calling Candidates to Lenten Renewal respected in your situation?

The Period of Purification and Enlightenment

Sheila O'Dea

If you only have time to read one paragraph ...

Read paragraph 126 [Latin 22, 153]. The Period of Purification and Enlightenment is the period prescribed in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults immediately preceding the celebration of the sacraments of initiation. The major description, "intense spiritual preparation," provides a clue to the emphasis and intent of this period. It is a time of preparation, preparation that is spiritual, spiritual preparation that is intense.

This is not a time for catechetical instruction. Therefore, it is not a time to complete everything that did not "get covered" during the Period of the Catechumenate! The vision in the rite is that by the time a person celebrates the Rite of Election, that person ...

• has matured in all of the elements of the Period of the Catechumenate,
• is ready to celebrate the initiation sacraments, and now
• needs this final period of intense spiritual preparation before celebrating the initiation sacraments.

1 Readers in the US, see 138–140.
During this time the elect “must have the intention of achieving an intimate knowledge of Christ and his Church” (129). This intention alone points to the deep spiritual nature of the preparation. What a marvellous reflection for the entire community: “How are we achieving an intimate knowledge of Christ?”

People frequently think they need to add things to this period but the rite says “All the resources of Lent should be brought to bear” for this intense preparation (8). These resources are the Sunday liturgies, the Scrutinies, and the Presentations, as well as the spiritual preparation for and mystagogical reflection on these major liturgies. As these liturgies are celebrated, there is a focus on “interior reflection” that both purifies and enlightens the mind and heart (126). This kind of interior reflection brings one to genuine self-knowledge and to a deeper knowledge of Christ.

**Things People Often Miss**

Sometimes there is an inclination to emphasize the purification of mind and heart (through searching one’s conscience and doing penance) and to ignore the enlightenment of minds and hearts that leads to a deeper relationship with Christ. The vision in the rite is that in this period, in all of its liturgies and in all of its reflections, purification and enlightenment are intrinsically connected.

It is important to note that this period is intended to renew the entire community as well as the elect (125 [Latin 21, 152]). Thus the particular prayer of this period is for everyone. The entire community is involved in intensely preparing to celebrate the paschal mystery. Too often initiation leaders, as well as other pastoral leaders, do not seem to realize that the liturgies of this period are the liturgies of the community. Without the focus on the whole community and its renewal, there is a tendency to see these liturgies as addendums to the period rather than as the heart of how the season is celebrated.

While the Scrutinies themselves are celebrated only when there are elect, the gospels of these ritual masses are considered important enough to the spiritual progress of the whole community that the *Introduction to the Lectionary* (97) suggests they are appropriate on the Third, Fourth and Fifth Sundays of Lent in all three cycles. These gospel stories of the Samaritan woman, the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus focus the community on baptismal images of water, light, and life.

Since the focus of the Period of Purification and Enlightenment, which normatively coincides with Lent, is baptismal, the community preparing to renew its baptismal commitment and the elect preparing to be baptized enter together into this spiritual period of intense preparation. Thus the elect join the community in its period of purification and enlightenment. This emphasis helps all to recognize that even in this particular period, those preparing to be initiated are being apprenticed into a way of life by the community.

Communities preparing to celebrate this season need to ask themselves if indeed they do enter into this season with intensity. Intense spiritual preparation for the celebration of the paschal mysteries is quite different from just adding more activities to Lent, more busy-ness. Communities would do better to suspend all parish activities except the genuine prayer and reflection that is at the heart of the season. All in the community are called to intense spiritual preparation; all are called to deepen their intimate relationship with Christ; all are called to purification and enlightenment. All are called to lay aside “business as usual” in order to “progress in their perception of sin and their desire for salvation” (130).

Since it is the celebration of the Scrutinies and the Presentations that particularly “brings about this process of purification and enlightenment and extends it over the course of the entire Lenten season,” (126), communities that are serious about this season will encourage their members to fully participate in these liturgies.
Other Comments

While the liturgical celebrations are the central actions of the period, many communities establish an extra time of communal prayer during each week. This provides them with an opportunity to pray further with the scriptures, prayers, and rites of the period. It is highly recommended that the energy of the community be focused during this period on the rituals that are specific to the period and that any prayer and reflection during the period draw from these rituals.

This is a period of preparation; preparation that is spiritual; spiritual preparation that is intense. It is a time of retreat, of spiritual recollection, of interior reflection—a season intended to renew the entire community.

Discussion Questions

1. In your community to what extent is Lent, the usual period of purification and enlightenment, an intense period of preparation?
2. What is there in parish life that interferes with this intense spiritual preparation?
3. How can initiation ministers in your community ensure that catechetical preparation has ended before Ash Wednesday?
4. What can parish leaders do to heighten the community's awareness of the connection between their "Lenten observance" and the activities of the elect?

Rites Belonging to the Period of Purification and Enlightenment (128–171)'

Sheila O'Dea

The rite indicates that during this period the celebration of the Scrutinies and the Presentations "brings about this process of purification and enlightenment and extends it over the course of the entire Lenten season" (126). The deepening of relationships, resolve, and convictions takes time and ritual, neither of which should be ignored if the community is to assist the elect during this period of intense spiritual preparation.

Scrutinies

If you only have time to read one paragraph ...

Read paragraph 128 [Latin 25, 154]. The Scrutinies, three major liturgies of the Period of Purification and Enlightenment, are celebrated normatively on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent. The purpose of these rites is to "complete the conversion of the elect and deepen their resolve to hold fast to Christ and to carry out their decision to love God above all." (These three liturgies, celebrated as part of the community’s Sunday liturgy, are designed to help the elect, as well as the whole community, to achieve "an intimate knowledge of Christ and his Church" and to "progress in genuine self-knowledge through serious examination of their lives and true repentance" (129). Thus these liturgies enable progress on the spiritual journey in self-knowledge, repentance, and relationships.

1 Read in the US, see 141–184.
The word “scrutiny” sometimes causes misunderstanding in this context. These rites have a dual purpose: they are purification and enlightenment, uncovering and bringing out, healing and strengthening. They uncover “all that is weak, defective, or sinful” in order to heal it. And they bring out “all that is upright, strong, and good” in order to strengthen it. This misunderstanding is most obvious when there is a clear tendency to focus on healing the sin but little or no focus on strengthening the good. Paying close attention to the ritual text should help communities to keep both aspects of the liturgy in balance.

**Things People Often Miss**

The celebration of all three Scrutinies is not optional! These liturgies are central to the intense spiritual preparation during this period. There is a progression within the liturgies from thirst to enlightenment to life, a progression that enables the community and the elect …

- to be “freed from the effects of sin and from the influence of the devil,”
- to “receive new strength in the midst of their spiritual journey,” and
- to “open their hearts to receive the gifts of the Savior” (131 [Latin 156]).

Thus it is clearly not “enough” to celebrate only one of the Scrutinies.

**Other Comments**

**Readings**

Each of the Scrutinies is celebrated in the context of the liturgy of the word of three of the ritual Masses of Christian Initiation. The scripture texts for these three masses are the same as those for the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent in Year A. Whenever the Scrutinies are celebrated—whether in the normative place on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent (A, B, or C) or on other Sundays of Lent, or on Lenten weekdays, or on Sundays, or even weekdays outside of Lent—the ritual masses are celebrated (133 [Latin 159]). The scriptures of these masses draw the community into baptismal images of water, light, and life, and are thus an important aspect of spiritual preparation for baptism and for the renewal of baptism. According to the *Introduction to the Lectionary* (97) the gospels of these masses, “may also be read in Year B and Year C.” What is especially important here is that communities come to appreciate that the gospel stories of the Samaritan woman, the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus are core gospels for the spiritual progress of the elect during this period. In addition, because the whole community is preparing to celebrate the paschal mysteries, these gospel stories are considered appropriate on these Lenten Sundays for all of our communities—with or without elect.

**Exorcisms**

In addition to specific scriptures, a homily, intercessions, and the dismissal, the ritual of the Scrutiny contains an exorcism. Again, the word may cause confusion so it is important that initiation ministers know the structure, purpose, and content of the exorcism. They are Trinitarian prayers which, over the course of the three Scrutinies, progress from images of water to enlightenment to life and which lead the elect to prepare to enter into a new relationship with Christ, the Living Water, the Light of the World, and the Resurrection and the Life.

Each exorcism has three parts:

- the initial prayer is addressed to the Godhead,
- the second prayer invokes the Spirit by a laying on of hands in silence, and
- the final prayer addresses the Christ.

Each prayer contains within it a plea to God for both purification and enlightenment.

The exorcisms are closely related to the scriptures of the Scrutiny rituals. Some people therefore suggest substituting the scriptures and exorcisms of the ritual with the scriptures of the day and exorcisms composed to relate to these scriptures. This goes far beyond adaptation! Just as eucharistic prayers, funeral rites, confirmation rites, and prayers to consecrate the
sacred chrism are set prayers, so also are the exorcisms. A decision to prepare one's own exorcisms clouds the significance of these prayers. While it is true that the community hears these same scriptures and exorcisms every year, it is likewise true that the hearing of these scriptures and exorcisms once a year contributes to the community's intense spiritual preparation to celebrate the paschal mysteries. There also they will experience prayers and actions that are specific to the uniqueness of the particular liturgy being celebrated.

The Heart of the Action
The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults calls for three Scrutinies to be celebrated “within the ritual Masses “Christian Initiation: The Scrutinies.” Normatively the celebrations are in the parish eucharistic liturgy on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent (133). The structure of the liturgy of the word in these masses is:

- proclamation of the word
- homily
- invitation to silent prayer
- intercessions for the elect
- exorcism, and
- dismissal of the elect.

The Scrutinies build on one another thus helping the progress of the elect in this intense spiritual time of purification and enlightenment. The various actions of these rituals progress over the three weeks through the baptismal images of water, light, and life; thus they are an important aspect of spiritual preparation for baptism and for the renewal of baptism.

Pastoral Wisdom for Celebrating
The first action is the proclamation of the word. All of the readings, and especially the gospels, draw on these baptismal images and are intended “to inspire in the elect a desire for purification and redemption by Christ.” Images of Jesus as the Living Water, the Light of the World, and the Resurrection and the Life are proclaimed in the stories of the woman at the well, the man born blind, and Lazarus (See 130.). Reflecting on Christ from these various aspects prepares the community and the elect to deepen their relationship with Christ.

Another major action of these rituals is the community's praying for the elect. Two points are worth noting about this prayer. The fact that it is the prayer of the community for the elect is seen in the gesture of the godparents placing their hand on the shoulder of the elect throughout the prayer: these intercessions are not the usual general intercessions (although particular intentions for the world and the Church may be included) of the mass but are very specifically for these elect on this part of their spiritual journey. A second consideration is the particular spirit of these intercessions. They clearly pray for aspects of both purification and enlightenment. While these intercessions may be adapted, that character of including in the prayer both of these aspects of conversion helps the overall ritual to keep its focus.

Once again the community prays for the elect in a particular kind of prayer called an exorcism. In each scrutiny the images of Christ proclaimed in the gospel come to the fore as the community prays once again for both purification and enlightenment. Sometimes pastoral leaders miss that this prayer is Trinitarian.
- The initial part is addressed to the Godhead.
- The second part is addressed to the Spirit through the gesture of the laying on of hands, which is always an invocation of the Spirit.
- The third part is addressed to the Christ.

As a result of not understanding that the laying on of hands is an invocation of the Spirit, leaders sometimes omit this gesture and thereby weaken or omit all together the Trinitarian nature of the exorcism.

The Presentations
Although this period is about both purification and enlightenment, the liturgies of
the Presentation of the Creed and the Presentation of the Lord’s Prayer are particularly intended to enlighten the elect as the Church “lovingly entrusts … [these] ancient texts that have always been regarded as expressing the heart of the Church’s faith and prayer” (134).

If you only have time to read one paragraph …

Read paragraph 134 [Latin 25, 181]). The Presentations are among the most misunderstood and neglected rites of the initiation process. The Presentations are two liturgies that normatively belong to the Period of Purification and Enlightenment. The intent of these liturgies is spiritual: to deepen the enlightenment of the elect.

Once the elect have completed their catechumenal formation and are intensely preparing for the initiation sacraments these two treasures of the Church’s prayer life—the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer—are presented to them to help them to deepen their relationship with Christ and with the Church. These ancient texts express “the heart of the Church’s faith and prayer.” Thus it is appropriate to give these treasures to the elect when they are ready to receive them:

• when they have matured in the Christian way of life through the activities of the Period of the Catechumenate (75 [Latin 19]),
• when the community has discerned that they are ready to celebrate the initiation sacraments (see 106 [Latin 22, 133]), and
• when they have begun to intensely prepare for that celebration.

Things People Often Miss

All too often these liturgies have become the giving of things, for example fancy pieces of paper with the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer printed on them. The liturgy is not about giving things; it is an action of Christ and His Church.

Often too, these liturgies are ignored or minimalized. Either they are not celebrated at all or they are attached to some other gathering of the elect or they are “fit in” during the Period of the Catechumenate because Lent is too busy. And most frequently, even when they are celebrated, the celebration takes place without the community! The vision in the rite is that these Presentations are celebrations of the community with the elect.

Although these liturgies are celebrated during the third and fifth week of Lent, they are still celebrations of the community and normatively celebrated within a weekday eucharistic liturgy. Efforts need to be made to help the community recognize that they are the ones presenting their treasures to the elect. It may be beneficial to lead the community in some reflections on the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer as they are not necessarily always experienced as such wonderful treasures.

Neither Presentation involves a giving of written texts. The texts of these prayers are written in the hearts of the community; the heart proclaims these prayers and, in time, these prayers will also be in the hearts of the elect listening to these proclamations.

Creed

The Presentation of the Creed is early in this period of preparation. By that time, the catechumenal formation of the elect has been completed. Thus the Creed “as it recalls the wonderful deeds of God for the salvation of the human race” (134) acts as a summary of the teaching the elect have already received. At the same time it points ahead to the baptismal promises they will make. After the proclamation of the word, the homilist draws out some of the connections between the word proclaimed, the faith of the Church, and the Creed.

The actual presentation is an action of both proclaiming and listening: the community proclaims the Creed while the elect listen. This action has the potential of being a very powerful moment for the community as they realize in their proclaiming that they are actually “handing over” the faith of the Church.
**Lord’s Prayer**

The Presentation of the Lord’s Prayer normatively takes place in the fifth week of Lent. The spirit of this prayer denotes the characteristics of a people who are the children of God and the strength of that relationship. The proximity of this Presentation to the Easter Triduum intensifies the preparation for baptism; soon these elect, as baptized people, will enter into this relationship with God.

Like the Presentation of the Creed, the central action of this Presentation is also proclaiming and listening. In this case the presider proclaims the gospel from Matthew in which Jesus taught the disciples to pray. As this gospel, the Lord’s Prayer, is proclaimed, the elect and the community listen. Then the homilist interprets the place of this prayer in the life of the community.

**Discussion Questions**

1. How is the two-fold nature of this period (purification and enlightenment) made clear in all the activities of Lent?
2. Does your parish respect the Church’s preference for the readings from John’s gospel on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent, especially when there are elect within the community?
3. If the ritual texts do not use the words “scrutiny” or “exorcism,” is there really any need to use these terms within the liturgical assembly, where there is no valid opportunity to explain the nuances of this specialized vocabulary?
4. Discuss the comparative sign value of presenting the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer from the heart of the community rather than on a piece of paper.

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**Preparation Rites on Holy Saturday**

(172–197)

Sheila O’Dea

If you only have time to read one paragraph …

Although Lent ends before the Easter Triduum begins, the Period of Purification and Enlightenment continues with the final piece of proximate preparation to celebrate the sacraments of initiation. The vision of this day for the whole Church is a day of quiet, reflection, prayer, and fast. The elect are invited to enter into this spirit with the rest of the community. (See 172 [Latin 26, 193].)

**Things People Often Miss**

Most importantly, this is not a time to practice for the sacraments. Preparation, throughout this whole period, as well as on this day, is spiritual. Certainly, there are people in the community who need to do all the practical preparations for the celebrations, but the elect are not envisioned as being part of that. For them this is final, spiritual, prayerful preparation. Any kind of “practice” takes their focus into a region of “how to do it” and denies them the full opportunity to be spiritually focused on the unique event about to happen in their lives.

**Other Comments**

Inviting the community and the elect to observe the two-day paschal fast helps all to remain in the spirit of this day. This particular fast is not penitential as is the fast throughout Lent. Rather it is a fast that is

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1 Readers in the US, see 185–205.
intended to be prayerful and spiritual in order to help all to continue the spirit of the Triduum throughout these days and not merely in the liturgical moments.

When it is possible to gather the elect, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults provides several rites that may be included in the prayer. The ritual book is very clear that the choice of rites to celebrate “should be guided by what best suits the particular circumstances of the elect” (173 [Latin 195, 197, 206]) and suggests that the chosen rites be celebrated in the context of a liturgy of the word including a homily or an instruction (see 174 ff., as well as within each particular rite).

The Heart of the Action

The Ephphetha Rite emphasizes the importance of each baptized person always “preaching” the Word in both word and deed. This rite precedes the Recitation of the Creed if both are celebrated.

The Recitation of the Creed is used only if the Presentation of the Creed has been celebrated. This rite is seen as a preparation for the creedal promises that will be made immediately before the celebration of baptism. The elect recite whatever version of the Creed was used in the Presentation. In the first rite they listened to the community; now they show that they have indeed taken these words to heart. And the community continues to pray that these elect will be faithful witnesses of the gospel.

It is also possible to celebrate the Choosing of A Baptismal Name if this is appropriate. (See 187 [Latin 203].)

Another of the preparation rites for this day is the Anointing with the Oil of Catechumens. Each conference of bishops makes the decision whether to omit this rite in the celebration of baptism, to transfer it to the Preparation Rites on Holy Saturday, or to celebrate it during the catechumenate. (See 33.7 [Latin 65.7].) The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops left the time of celebration optional. The United States conference decided to reserve the rite for the catechumenate period and the purification and enlightenment period but to omit it at the celebration of baptism and as one of the preparation rites of Holy Saturday. It is most important to remember that this rite is recommended for use several times throughout the Period of the Catechumenate “wherever this seems beneficial or desirable” (98 [Latin 103, 127]). Thus this should not be the first time the elect are anointed with the oil of catechumens for strength and God’s help on their spiritual journey.

Pastoral Wisdom for Celebrating

If several of the recommended rites are to be celebrated, there could be a period of prayer, silence, and reflection between them to give time for the intent of each rite to deepen in the hearts of the elect. Likewise, there could be an opportunity for some mystagogical reflection following the celebration so that the elect and the community can together deepen their understanding of the mysteries being celebrated. Whatever the choice, the gathering and prayer conclude with a final prayer and a blessing of the elect, which once again calls for God to sanctify them as they prepare for the initiation sacraments.

Discussion Questions

1. How does your initiation team decide whether it is appropriate or necessary to celebrate …
   - the Ephphetha Rite?
   - the Recitation of the Creed?
   - Anointing with the Oil of Catechumens?
   - the Choosing of a Baptismal Name?

2. To what extent is the paschal fast promoted and observed in your community from the end of the Mass of the Lord’s Supper until the Easter Vigil?
Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation
(198–233)

About the Notes (198–210)

Overview (198–200)

If you only have time to read one paragraph ...

Paragraph 198 [Latin 27] identifies the third and final step as the celebration of the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and eucharist, and provides rich theological insights into the effect this celebration has on the lives of the elect.

Things People Often Miss

It is important to note that the text refers to the Church as the people of God. This designation has its New Testament roots in the First Letter of Peter, where we read, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people” (1 Peter 2.9). In our own day the Second Vatican Council chose “the people of God” as the fundamental title of the Church in its Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium, 21 November, 1964).

Our understanding of the Church as the people of God has particular application in North American society today. All too often we hear the mantra that religion is a private matter. The proponents of this view insist that religion is all about an individual’s personal relationship with God, to the extent that belonging to a community or joining others in corporate worship is a totally secondary matter that depends solely on a person’s spiritual inclinations or felt needs.

Yet it is clear from both the Old and the New Testament that God’s plan of salvation entails the founding of a people—“God’s own people”—and that it is by being joined to that people and by sharing the life of that people that we find our salvation. Such is the conviction that the elect bring to the Easter Vigil, where they bear witness to this truth as they proclaim their faith in “the holy catholic Church.”

Celebration of Baptism (201–207)

If you only have time to read one paragraph ...

Baptism is the first in the triad of sacraments that comprise Christian initiation. Paragraph 205 [Latin 31] highlights the paschal character of this sacrament and the action of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in its celebration.

Things People Often Miss

We should note first of all that what the elect bring to baptism is “faith in Christ’s paschal mystery” and that the goal of the period of purification and enlightenment has been precisely to bring this paschal faith to the centre of the elect’s life. The introduction to the period of purification and enlightenment made this paschal dimension very clear: “For both the elect and the local community, therefore, the Lenten season is a time for spiritual recollection in preparation for the celebration of the paschal mystery” (125 [Latin 21, 152]).

This faith is more than an intellectual assent to the truth of Christ’s passage into glory. It involves a conviction that this passage lies at the very heart of the mystery.

1 Readers in the US, see 206–236, 241–243.
2 References to the Latin editio typica are provided for readers using an edition other than that of Canada or the USA.
of salvation and that the fulfilment of one's life is found in sharing in that passage. And it involves a covenantal commitment to give one's life in Christ for the sake of the world and the glory of God.

The profession of faith in the paschal mystery is at the same time a profession of faith in the Trinity, since it is the Father who sent the Son, and it is the Holy Spirit who gathers the world into the mystery of the Lord's passage.

Sacraments are dramatic encounters with the living God, and in the baptismal washing it is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who act for the sake of the salvation of the world, drawing the elect into the very mystery of the passage. They share in the Lord's own death and resurrection "and receive the holiness of God himself" (201 [Latin 28,33]).

**Celebration of Confirmation (208–209)**

*If you only have time to read one paragraph ...*

Paragraph 208 [Latin 34] calls for the celebration of confirmation immediately following the baptism of the elect. It provides a much-needed theological rationale for confirmation as a sacrament of Christian initiation by situating the sacrament within the context of the paschal mystery.

**Things People Often Miss**

The text makes the point that celebrating baptism and confirmation together is in conformity with the ancient Roman practice. This clarification is necessary, since Catholics of our own generation have been accustomed to a different arrangement.

Baptism and confirmation are to be celebrated together because "[t]he conjunction of the two celebrations signifies the unity of the paschal mystery." Sacramental signs effect or bring about what they signify. When the elect are immersed in the baptismal waters, the sacramental sign signifies their identification with Christ in his dying and rising from the dead. And when the newly baptized are anointed with the oil of chrism, the sacramental sign signifies their identification with Christ in his ascension into glory at the right hand of God. But although the paschal mystery has these two distinct aspects, it remains essentially the single and indivisible mystery of the return of the beloved Son to the Father.

For a more extended discussion of this subject, see "Re-visioning Confirmation within the Christian Initiation of Children" in *National Bulletin on Liturgy*, #161, Vol. 33, Summer 2000.

**Other Comments**

The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* restores the traditional sequence of celebration for the sacraments of initiation, namely, baptism, confirmation, and eucharist within a single sacramental event. To make this possible in parish churches (where the bishop will not be present), the Rite authorizes the priest to confirm both adults and children of catechetical age (14).

**Celebration of the Eucharist (210)**

*If you only have time to read one paragraph ...*

Paragraph 210 [Latin 36] presents full participation in the celebration of the eucharist as the culminating point of Christian initiation, and it describes the role that the newly baptized and confirmed now have in this celebration.

**Things People Often Miss**

In its order of celebration—baptism, confirmation, eucharist—the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* makes it clear that full participation in the eucharist is the grand conclusion of the initiation process. Indeed, standard theology has long taught that baptism and confirmation have an inner orientation or drive toward the eucharist and that their full purpose is found there.
The primacy of the eucharist lies in its nature as a sacred, sacrificial meal in which the world experiences the fullness of communion with the all-holy God. The rite speaks here of the eucharist as “a foretaste of the eternal banquet,” and elsewhere as “a foretaste of the kingdom of God” (198 [Latin 27]). The sacred meal is an eloquent and highly evocative sacramental sign. To sit at table with God is to share the life of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, to experience the joy of living in the household of God.

**Other Comments**

Some attention should be given to what the rite means when it says that the newly baptized “take part” in the celebration of the eucharist, for it means more than “being able to receive holy communion.”

It means, first of all, being able to take part in the general intercessions. The neophytes, “raised to the ranks of the royal priesthood,” are now capable of joining Christ, the great high priest, in his unending prayer of intercession at the throne of God.

It means being able to join the entire community in the great prayer of praise and thanksgiving that is the table blessing of the feast. It means likewise being able to join the rest of the assembly in the Lord’s Prayer (presented to the elect during the fifth week of Lent or as part of the preparation rites of Holy Saturday).

Finally, it means sharing with the entire community in the holy food and drink of the kingdom feast—a food and drink that is the body and blood of Christ.

**About the Rites (211–233)**

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults provides the ritual details for the celebration of the sacraments of Christian initiation at the Easter Vigil. Because of the richness and complexity of this celebration, careful attention must be paid to its preparation and elaboration.

**The Heart of the Action**

There can be no doubt that the heart of the action is the communal sharing of the holy food and drink at the table of the kingdom feast. The goal of the entire enterprise of salvation is to gather all peoples and nations into a communion of shared life in the living God, and the assembly's participation in the sacred meal is the sacramental sign and revelation of this communion achieved even now in the world.

At the same time there are two other actions that are of great importance and that lead directly to the sharing of the table of the feast. The first of these is the baptismal washing, by which the elect are initiated into the mystery of Christ's dying and rising; the second is the anointing with chrism, by which the newly baptized are initiated into the mystery of his ascension into glory. These sacraments enable the neophytes to join the assembly as full participants in the kingdom feast.

**Pastoral Wisdom for Celebrating**

**Promoting the Role of the Assembly**

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults takes for granted the role of the assembly in the celebration of the sacraments of Christian initiation. This is simply an observation, not a criticism. Nevertheless, some clarification of the role of the assembly is necessary, since we are currently in the midst of a major liturgical reform.

What needs to be said here is that the assembly is the human setting for the celebration; baptism, confirmation and eucharist take place within the assembly. Even more to the point, it is the assembly itself that celebrates these sacraments as expressions of its own life. In baptism and confirmation the assembly reaches out to the elect in order to draw them into its paschal life, and in the eucharist the assembly admits the neophytes to full participation in its paschal feast.

With this in mind it becomes clear that the first task of those who plan the cele-
bration is to ensure the full, conscious and active participation of the entire assembly. Any arrangement that fails to take this participation into account would cause a major distortion in the celebration.

**Celebrating Baptism (211–224)**

Some of the details regarding the celebration of baptism depend on the location of the font or pool (see 211–212 [Latin 213], where three options are provided). If the font is located near the entrance to the nave, and if there is open space that allows the assembly to gather round, there can be a fully developed procession to the baptismal area accompanied by the litany of the saints.

The deacon or another minister should ensure the proper participation of the assembly. The people should stand after the presentation of the candidates for Christian initiation and before the invitation to prayer is given. They should be given the hymnal number for the litany of the saints and, if they are to remain in the pews, they should be asked to turn in their places and face the procession as it makes its way to the font. When the people remain in their pews, care must be taken to ensure that those who gather at the font do not block the view.

An acclamation is sung by the people at the conclusion of the prayer over the water. The assembly's participation will be enhanced if the choir sings it first, followed by all the people as directed by the leader of song.

The anointing with the oil of catechumens is often anticipated as a preparation rite celebrated earlier on Holy Saturday.3

Immersion is the preferred form of baptism, since it expresses better the reality of this sacrament as participation in the dying and rising of Christ, and parishes do well to ensure that they have a font or pool that will accommodate it. Immersion may be "of the whole body or of the head only."

A short acclamation may be sung after each baptism. After the first baptism the choir might sing this acclamation once, followed by all the people at the direction of the leader of song.

If baptism has been by immersion of the whole body, bath towels will be needed at the font or pool, and the newly baptized will need to retire to a room to put on dry clothes. It would be wise for the music ministry to have prepared a list of hymns for the assembly to sing during this interval.

As part of the explanatory rites the newly baptized are clothed with a baptismal garment. This garment will normally be the alb, which is not exclusively clerical vesture. In early Roman practice the neophytes wore this white garment at the daily celebration of the eucharist throughout the octave of Easter (Easter week).

**Celebrating Confirmation (225–230)**

The early Roman practice was to celebrate confirmation at the episcopal chair (Latin, cathedra), the symbol of apostolic presidency and authority. In all probability the bishop poured oil over the head of the newly baptized person after the manner of anointing priests and kings in ancient times. The result was a highly evocative sacramental sign.

The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* provides for confirmation to be celebrated "either at the baptismal font or in the sanctuary, depending on the place where, according to local conditions, baptism has been celebrated."

There needs to be a kind of proportional-ity or balance between the sacramental signs of baptism and confirmation, so that confirmation is not visually eclipsed by baptism but rather stands out in its own strong light. Many communities now

3 In the US this rite is omitted by decision of the conference of bishops; see RCIA, US edition, Appendix III: National Statutes for the Catechumenate, #16.
reserve an ample supply of chrism in the parish church; it is usually stored in a vessel that is prominently displayed in the baptistry. This oil would then be poured into a dish for use during the celebration. Today, the bishop or presiding priest “dips his right thumb in the chrism and makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of the one to be confirmed” (229 [Latin 231]), but a generous use of chrism will help to highlight the sign.

Provision is made for a suitable song to be sung by the community between baptism and confirmation. This song, while optional, is highly recommended, since it can serve to separate confirmation from baptism and help avoid any confusion between confirmation and the explanatory rites that are connected with baptism. If there is a procession to the place where confirmation will be celebrated, the song may be sung at this time.

If the people are not already standing, they should be asked to stand before the bishop or presiding priest calls the assembly to prayer.

**Celebrating the Liturgy of the Eucharist (231–233)**

The liturgy of the eucharist is the culmination of the entire celebration and, invoking once again the principle of proportionality or balance with regard to sacramental signs, it should stand out clearly as the highpoint of the initiation rites and of the whole of the Easter Vigil. With regard to the strength of the sacramental signs, it is most important that the communion rite be celebrated in a truly festive manner and that the cup of the new and everlasting covenant be shared by all.

The paschal joy that suffuses the entire celebration should be particularly evident in the liturgy of the eucharist, as the people of God, whose life is dedicated to calling the world to salvation, rejoice in the presence of those who have been added to their numbers at the kingdom feast.

It should be noted that the special joy of the neophytes is that they participate now together with and in the midst of the assembly. They take part in the general intercessions, but this does not mean that they offer the petitions. Some of them take part in the procession with the gifts of bread and wine, but this does not mean that the gifts are expanded to allow all of them to take part in the procession. They join in the recitation of the Lord’s Prayer, but this does not mean that they should be invited to the altar for this prayer.

**Discussion Questions**

1. How are candidates for the sacraments of initiation prepared to live among the people of God during the catechumenate and during the period of purification and enlightenment?
2. How are candidates for the sacraments of initiation brought to an awareness of the central role that the paschal mystery plays in Christian life?
3. How successful has the Church been in helping people to see the connection between confirmation and the paschal mystery? Between Christ and the sacrament of confirmation?
4. To what extent are candidates for the sacraments of initiation, as well as catechists and other parishioners, aware that the liturgy of the eucharist is the highpoint of the Easter Vigil celebration and that full participation in the eucharist is the culmination of the initiation process?
5. To what extent are the candidates for the sacraments of initiation aware of the significance of their first sharing in the general intercessions, in the proclamation of the eucharistic prayer, and in the communal recitation of the Lord’s Prayer?
6. How much attention is given in your pastoral situation to ensuring the full, conscious, and active participation of the whole assembly throughout the celebration of the Easter Vigil?
7. In preparations for the Easter Vigil celebration in your pastoral situation, how much attention has been given to the principle of proportionality as described above?
About the Notes (234–241)

If you only have time to read one paragraph ... 

Read paragraph 234 [Latin 37]. Note that it does not say that this is the time to meet all the parish groups and ministries for the first time and choose one (or perhaps some) to become involved in. It's really too late for that now; that was the work of the catechumenate (see paragraph 75.4 [Latin 19.4] and 118B [Latin 144].) The catechumenate is the time for the testing and discernment of gifts and the matching of them with the work of the community. If this work was not already done during the period of the catechumenate, the community is in danger of losing the newly initiated completely, even before the Easter season has ended.

The references in paragraph 236 [Latin 39, 235] use comparative language: increases, easier, more beneficial, and closer. Paragraph 236 assumes that a broad-based, hands-on exposure to the total apostolic activity of the community has been a part of the period of the catechumenate; mystagogy is the time for more formal integration in those areas where the neophytes' gifts and interests most obviously lie.

Nor is this a time to "play catch-up," a time to stuff in all the doctrine that didn't get covered because an abbreviated, pre-programmed, school-year model of the catechumenate was adopted. (See paragraph 76 for fuller information about the duration of the catechumenate: "Nothing can be settled a priori." )

According to paragraph 234 [Latin 37], mystagogy is a time for "deepening their grasp of the paschal mystery." Guided reflection during this time should provide neophytes with a framework for the lifelong exploration of the paschal mystery that is essential for growth in the Christian spiritual life and lifestyle. This may not be as simple as "meet the Knights, the CWL, the St. Vincent de Paul Society and the lectors," but it is essential for maturation in the faith and provides an anchor for the Christian spiritual life that will serve the newly baptized well throughout the rest of their lives.

Paragraphs 235 and 237 [Latin 38 and 40] open up for us the nature of mystagogical reflection. The gospel is brought into dialogue with the immediate experience of the sacraments: the total experience of the Easter Vigil (indeed of the whole Triduum feast) and of the Sunday masses of the Easter season. We ask: What do the Sunday gospel and the other readings say about your ritual experience? How do we celebrate that? How will you live that out? We train the newly initiated to reflect (and join them in reflection) on these questions as their (and our) life experience and ritual experience continue to grow and interact.

Things People Often Miss

If we have established a catechumenon—that is, reserved seating for catechumens at Sunday liturgy—a second, separate place needs to be established for neophytes (see paragraph 238 [Latin 236]). While those who were not initiated this year will continue to occupy the catechumenon, the
neophytes will be integrated into the general seating of the community after Pentecost.

**About the Ritual Texts**

**The Heart of the Action**

The heart of the Church's life is the liturgy; the heart of all the Church's liturgy is eucharist; the heart of the eucharist is the eucharistic prayer. The whole purpose of Christian initiation is to draw the world into this prayer around the banquet table of the Lord. Needless to say, the eucharistic prayer in isolation cannot sustain the Church. Present and active in the liturgy of the word, the Spirit of Christ enables the response of faith proclaimed at the eucharistic table. The community's sharing in communion renews the community's covenant commitment to life through, with, in and as the body of Christ bearing his presence to the world.

The jumping-off point for mystagogical reflection is found in the readings of the Sunday masses of the Easter season. Within each Sunday's gathering, we journey deeper into the mystery we touched in our Triduum celebrations—the readings and the special rites. We peel back a layer of the mystery, only to discover in the process that the mystery is even bigger, deeper, richer, and more enticing than we had ever before understood.

In order to understand how and why the season develops the way it does, we have to examine the readings for the season. On each of the Sundays, in every cycle of the lectionary, the first reading is from Acts. This is our first clue that the season is not meant to provide us with or to gradually enact a chronology of the events after the resurrection, like a series of anniversaries. Acts is the story of the post-Ascension and post-Pentecost Church. If we were doing chronology—a history walk—we shouldn't hear any of this until after Pentecost. No, the purpose of this design is to assist the 2000-year-old Church in reflecting on, understanding, and celebrating its own present life by re-examining its birth and early life: its lifestyle, kerygmatic preaching, missionary successes, signs and wonders, persecutions, community problems and controversies, new concerns, discernment and solutions, new ministries and unexpected ministers.

In the second readings for Year A, portions of the First Letter of Peter are proclaimed. Another clue to the shape of the season! This letter reads like a classic baptismal homily. Clearly this too is not chronology but invitation to mystagogy, as are the second readings of the other cycles.

An aerial view of the second readings of the season across the three-year cycle offers a most interesting mystagogical smorgasbord. Year A addresses the newness of life the neophytes have begun to share. The neophytes and all the baptized explore and celebrate their Christian identity using kaleidoscope of images: birth, ransom, loss and return, chosen race, royal priesthood, one body.

The second readings in Year B are from the 1st Letter of John. These passages seem to be addressed not so much to neophytes as to a well-established, perhaps long-established, Christian community in need of reenergizing and revitalization. This offers us mystagogy for the long haul: living out of mystery as a permanent way of life. This comes across as a pep talk for the war weary—those who are wondering if it's worth it after all in the face of: a hostile world, the call to obedience and love, moral failure and sin.

In Year C, we draw on Revelation to paint for the Church of today a portrait of the splendour and fullness of the kingdom to which we journey, culminating in the vision of the new Jerusalem where no temple, no sun, no moon are needed for here God lives among mortals. Clearly this is not chronology but invitation to mystagogy, to explore the meaning and nature of life in Christ.

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3 For a fuller discussion, see National Bulletin on Liturgy #160, Spring 2000 pp. 23–32.
If we look at the gospel selections, the Easter season begins and ends with the bestowal of the Spirit. And it does so in every cycle—A, B, and C! Surely this must tell us that this season is not a walk through ancient history. This final signal of the real shape and nature of this season is the shift, on the Fourth Sunday, away from post-resurrection stories to excerpts from Jesus’ farewell discourse in John’s gospel. These passages guide us ever deeper into Christ’s new post-Ascension relationship with the Church and the world and into the nature of the Church as human and divinized community. Throughout this season, the homilist—the mystagogue—draws on the appearance stories and excerpts from Jesus’ farewell discourse to gradually unfold before the gathered community significant aspects of their shared passage in Christ through death to glorious, Spirit-filled life in the new creation: the meaning of Christ’s resurrection, the mystery of our salvation through participation in Christ’s passage, Christ’s revelation of his presence in the life of the Church, the nature of the Church as Spirit-filled community of disciples, the mission of the Church in the world and the glory whose fullness we await.

Pastoral Wisdom for Celebrating
Even the most cursory examination of the sequence of gospel readings refutes any attempt at a chronological interpretation of the season. Failure to recognize the shape of the season often leads to an abandonment of it. In this case, the season usually breaks down around the Fourth Sunday when the appearance stories cease and we turn to other matters. The link between Ascension/Pentecost and the Triduum is severed. The unity of the mystery disintegrates and Pentecost becomes an independent feast of the Holy Spirit. Failure to recognize the shape of the season fragments the mystery itself and diminishes our appreciation of it.

Paragraphs 235 and 237 challenge preachers and musicians (those in charge of the liturgy’s most optional texts) to broaden their horizons when preparing for the Sunday masses of the Easter season. These paragraphs call the community to continually reflect on the life of the earliest Christian community as laid out in the readings from Acts, 1 Peter (or 1 John, or Revelation) and John’s Easter gospels in the light of its experience of the Triduum feast. One cannot lead the community to such reflection by treating the Sunday masses of the Easter season as isolated events. Musicians must select music that will bring out the inner unity and flow of the season; preachers must preach the season to accomplish the same thing.

Discussion Questions
1. How and when are those seeking initiation introduced to the various apostolic activities and ministries in your pastoral situation?
2. In your pastoral situation to what extent is the scheduling of any of the rites predetermined? Do you have an ongoing pre-catechumenate and catechumenate?
3. How does the homilist knit the Sundays of the Easter season together? How does the homilist help the community to return to its roots in the Triduum feast again and again throughout the Easter season?
4. How does the music ministry help this to happen?
PART II: RITES FOR PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES

1. Christian Initiation of Children
Who Have Reached Catechetical Age
(242–306)

About the Notes
If you only have time to read one paragraph ... 

Paragraph 242 [Latin 306] of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is one of the most important paragraphs in the Roman liturgical books in which children's spirituality is specifically addressed. The third sentence, in particular, acknowledges—indeed asserts—the child's capacity for personal faith and conscience.

In this regard both the Rite of Baptism for Children and the Directory for Masses with Children, which use predominantly didactic language in speaking of children's spirituality and its development, stand in regrettable contrast to the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. Too often our lived experience of spiritual formation in childhood has consisted solely of religious education that is based on a programmed and graded curriculum with testable content; here in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults we have a quite different phenomenon. We have the language of formation: faith, conversion, and conscience.

One need only read the work of Sophia Cavalletti, whose approach to childhood spiritual formation is called "Catechesis of the Good Shepherd," to be convinced of the reality of the spiritual life of children and their capacity for faith and conversion. In a 1999 speech to the National American Montessori Conference, Cavalletti described three characteristics necessary for the development of a healthy spiritual life in children: joy, dignity, and essentiality. The entire process of initiation and lifelong spiritual formation must be shot through with these three elements. Needless to say, the reality of the child's spirituality means that a discernment process, as serious and probing as that used with adults, is both a necessary and a possible part of the initiation process for children.

A brief examination of paragraph 243 [Latin 307], especially the first three sentences, is also crucial for those working with young catechumens. Here we find the necessary characteristics of the process of formation of children: personal, age-appropriate, of a non-predetermined duration, and supported by religious education.

Things People Often Miss
The mere existence of this children's section of the rite calls into question the current, all-too-frequent dichotomy of initiation vs. sacrament preparation. If the process that leads to life around the Lord's table by means of the celebration of the three sacraments of initiation at the Easter

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1 Readen in the US, see 252–276, 291–330. The Canadian edition does not provide an adaptation of the Rite of Election to be celebrated with children.

2 Notice that this section is an adaptation of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, not a separate "Rite of Christian Initiation of Children" or "RCIC" as some try to call it. There is, in fact, in the Canadian text, no such thing as a "Rite of Christian Initiation of Children."

3 References to the Latin editio typica are provided for readers using an edition other than that of Canada or the USA.

Vigil is to be founded on a process of conversion and formation, surely the same must be said of the process that leads to the celebration of either one or both of the last two of these sacraments—namely, confirmation and eucharist—with children baptized in infancy. A thoughtful reading of these two paragraphs (242-243) should lead those who work with already-baptized, catechetical-aged children in preparation for confirmation and eucharist, to become familiar as well with Part II.4 of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, “Preparation of Uncatechized Adults for Confirmation and Eucharist”; for under the terms of the rite such children are “uncatechized adults.”

Other Comments
The word “conversion” used in paragraph 243, may puzzle those who define the word as describing a move away from a perhaps-consciously sinful lifestyle to one more oriented to God. It will be helpful in this case to widen the meaning of the word to embrace the idea of a process of awakening, a movement from unawareness to heightened sensitivity and awe.

About the Ritual Texts
The rites themselves are “another kettle of fish”! Unfortunately, the texts for the rites with children are overly adapted. One is tempted to consider them as suggestions for minor adaptations that may be made if necessary in the rites provided for use with adults; but overall there are so many problems (even in the “simplified” wording provided) as to make them unusable.

Furthermore, the recommendation that the rites not be celebrated with children in as public a manner as with adults (247 and elsewhere) is unfounded in the North American context. When children are surrounded by adults they trust, they will have no problem celebrating the rites within the full Sunday assembly.

Rite of Acceptance
The removal of the candidates’ first acceptance of the gospel from the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens represents a denial of the children’s capacity for personal faith. There is no reason to remove it.

No Rite of Election?
Elimination of the rite of election in the case of children of catechetical age is questionable for at least three reasons:

- children will be bolstered by public testimony with regard to their progress and readiness;
- legal adoption of children at this age requires the child’s signature, a recognition by secular society of the child’s capacity to appreciate the meaning of signing a document; and
- a penitential rite as the sole marker of the beginning of final preparation for initiation (as in the Canadian ritual book) skews the meaning of the process.

Penitential Rites?
A particular warning is in order with regard to the Penitential Rites (Scrutinies) provided here for use with children (271-279). The texts provided are highly problematic. First, the rite presented here is a combined rite (a scrutiny of unbaptized children celebrated along with first confession of baptized children), something that our Canadian ritual book generally avoids. This particular combination is inappropriate and confusing; a scrutiny is not a penitential rite. Both opening prayers provided (272A and B) speak of cleansing from sin; B asks for pardon and peace. The adult scrutinies ask for openness to conversion and strengthening in the struggle against evil (uncovering and healing), but not for pardon and cleansing. Such cleansing is the function of baptism and should not be anticipated in this rite. On the surface, it may appear to be a fine distinction, but it is a crucial one. Second, the intercessions provided are not really intercessions at all and begin “That we may ….” One of the marks of the baptized is their exercise of the priestly office of Christ in offering intercessory prayer. In the intercessions of all the other rites of
initiation, the unbaptized present are to be prayed over and prayed for but they do not make the prayer. Third, paragraph 276 fails to note that only the unbaptized are prayed for in a minor exorcism. Furthermore, in exorcism prayer B (dialogue form) the celebrant's third paragraph is poorly written ("Loving Father, free these young people from whatever could make them bad ...") and should never be used under any circumstances. Fourth, following the exorcism the children are anointed. The text again fails to distinguish baptized and unbaptized. For the children, the use of anointing at this moment in this rite will forge an erroneous link between anointing and forgiveness of sin.

Conclusion
In the final analysis experience has shown that separate rites for children of catechetical age are unnecessary. Many, including the North American Forum on the Catechumenate, recommend full, age-appropriate use of Part I of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults with children and an abandonment of these adapted rites, except where the individual child's needs require such a degree of adaptation.

Discussion Questions
1. In your own pastoral situation, how does the process of initiation of children of catechetical age differ from that of adults? How is it identical?
2. In your own pastoral situation, what kind of discernment has guided the process of initiation of children of catechetical age who were not baptized in infancy?
3. How does formation of catechetical-aged children who were baptized in infancy reflect the process outlined for children who were not baptized in infancy?

4. Preparation of Uncatechized Adults
(376–386)¹

If you only have time to read one paragraph ...
Read paragraph 376 [Latin 295]¹ The sentence beginning "Even though ..." (as well as the one following it) disguises a profound theological and spiritual reality in its simple straightforward language. The baptized are no less baptized simply because they have not been catechized; nor are they less baptized simply because their initiation has not been completed. "[There is] one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all" (Ephesians 4.5–6). "Hence their conversion is based on the baptism they have already received, the effects of which they must develop." All our work with the already baptized must begin with the fact of their baptism.

¹ Readers in the US, see 400-410.
² References to the Latin editio typica are provided for readers using an edition other than that of Canada or the USA.

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First steps should include deliberate work to get those already baptized in touch with this central event in their lives: find or obtain baptismal certificates (not just as proof of the event but as starting points for mystagogy), concretize information found on the certificate (visit the church and its font, locate it on a map, get a photo of the building), find names (and perhaps photos) of godparents, locate souvenirs (photos, gifts, the baptismal gown), retrieve family stories of the event or the individual’s name. Where none of this is possible it may be necessary to reconstruct in the imagination the essentials of what must have happened: a minister, godparents, family, and a place (church, hospital, or home).

At this point mystagogy involves plumbing the depths of an event that is, although a distant memory, the most important thing that has happened in their life. It may be necessary to use selected texts from the masses of the Easter season to help those seeking confirmation and eucharist to appreciate why the fact of their baptism is “a big deal.” With the strong foundation of their baptism firmly established, those asking to complete their initiation will find it only natural that they will not undergo rites identical to those for the unbaptized.

Things People Often Miss

The opening sentence of paragraph 376 defines this portion of the text as “pastoral guidelines” and paragraphs 377 and 383 [Latin 296 and 302] use the words “suited to their needs.” Life experience may vary widely across these areas within the same individual and certainly among individuals in a group. Each must be lead to rejoice in the gift of personal experience and to drink in what the community now has to offer. This places on those leading the already baptized to the eucharistic table the responsibility for discernment of needs in the four main areas identified for catechumens in paragraph 75: catechesis, maturation in relationship with the Trinity, community integration, and liturgical rites. These guidelines apply only to the uncatechized. To the extent that individuals may in fact be catechised to a degree, the process may be abbreviated, keeping in mind, however, that catechesis is only one of four kinds of formation required by the rite.

Discernment is crucial to honouring the fact of a person’s baptism. If the only perceptible difference in the treatment of the baptized and the unbaptized is within the liturgical rites, we have failed in the effort.

Other Comments

Obviously, we cannot begin to understand these guidelines for adaptation of the process or the adapted rites that were developed out of them if we do not have a thorough grounding in and an appreciation of the notes and rites for the unbaptized. It is dangerous to work with baptized candidates for completion of initiation if you have not read “Part 1: Christian Initiation of Adults” thoroughly.

Discussion Questions

1. How have baptized candidates for confirmation and eucharist coming to your community been made aware of the significance of their baptism?
2. How is the fact of their baptism asserted in the scheduling of the various rites?
3. How is the fact of their baptism asserted in the pattern of their formation?
4. What kind of discernment process is used to develop a path for the formation process?
5. How are they integrated into the fabric of the community?
5. Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church

(387–417)

About the Notes

If you only have time to read one or two paragraphs ...

Read paragraphs 387 and 389 [Latin R12 and R3]. It is a basic tenet of our faith that "[there is] one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all" (Ephesians 4.5–6). So, just as with the persons addressed in the previous chapter of the text, all our work with the already baptized must begin with the fact of their baptism. These paragraphs emphatically assert the need to acknowledge, appreciate and honour both the identity of individuals seeking reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church and the role of the baptizing ecclesial Community in the individual's life of faith. "The rite is so arranged that no greater burden than necessary is required for the establishment of communion and unity" (387).

Here too, first steps should include deliberate work to get those already baptized in touch with the central role that the event of their baptism plays in their lives (if this is necessary): find or obtain baptismal certificates (not just as proof of the event but as starting points for mystagogy); concretize information found on the certificate (visit the church and its font, locate it on a map, get a photo of the building); find names (and perhaps photos) of godparents; locate souvenirs (photos, gifts, the baptismal gown); retrieve family stories of the event or the individual's name. Where none of this is possible it may be necessary to reconstruct in the imagination the essentials of what must have happened: a minister, godparents, family, and a place (church, hospital, or home).

At this point mystagogy involves plumbing the depths of an event that is, although perhaps a distant memory, the most important thing that has happened in their life. We must also be aware that those who come to us after having been active in a separated ecclesial Community may come with a rich appreciation of their baptismal identity.

Things People Often Miss

To the extent that individuals may in fact be extensively catechized by the baptizing Community, the process will be reshaped, keeping in mind, however, that catechesis is only one of four kinds of formation required by the rite. Life experience may vary widely across these areas within the same individual and certainly among individuals in a group. Each must be lead to rejoice in the gift of their own experience and to drink in what the "new" Community has to offer. This places on those leading the already baptized to the eucharistic table the responsibility for discernment of needs in the four main areas identified for catechumens in paragraph 75: catechesis, maturation in relationship with the Trinity, community integration, and liturgical rites.

This discernment is crucial to honouring the fact of a person's baptism. If the only perceptible difference in the treatment of the baptized and the unbaptized is within the liturgical rites, we have failed in the effort.

1 Readers in the US, see 473–504.
2 Latin numberings preceded by "R" refer to the appendix of the Ordo initiationis, "Rite of Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church."
Other Comments
For those who find themselves working with individuals baptized in another ecclesiastical Community and never catechized, it is necessary to consult the pastoral notes in chapter four (376–386) written for use with uncatechized adults.

About the Ritual Texts
The Heart of the Action
The celebration of reception leads to the sharing in the life of the community whose centre is the table within the Sunday eucharistic assembly. This is the inner thrust of the rite. However, there is provision for circumstances in which celebration of the rite within that context is not appropriate/possible. In addition, if the person being received has been validly confirmed the rite of confirmation is not celebrated. So the core of the rite is:

- invitation,
- profession of faith,
- act of reception,
- celebrant’s sign of welcome,
- general intercessions, and
- sign of peace (which may be moved from its usual place just before communion).

The name of the rite is a clue to its heart: the act of reception. The candidate makes a profession of Catholic faith, but it is the Lord, through the community gathered, who “receives” and leads to the table. The Decree on Ecumenism points out that by faith and baptism these candidates already experience some degree of communion with us; the community that gathers to celebrate this rite, whether large or small, witnesses to the Lord’s reception of the candidate into “the full communion” of the Catholic Church.

Pastoral Wisdom for Celebrating
If this talk of full (vs. partial or “imperfect”) communion makes us uncomfortable, if we or candidates who have been confirmed (“invalidly”) in a separated ecclesial Community are uncomfortable about celebrating confirmation (again), then we are becoming sensitive to the potential for triumphalism that we may unleash if this rite and the process that leads to its celebration are handled inappropriately. Whether candidates come to us catechized or uncatechized, whether or not they come to us having enjoyed an active sacramental life in their baptizing Community, this rite is more than simply a preliminary to confirmation and eucharist. This deceptively simple rite is packed full-to-bursting with meaning. Yes, it affirms the bond between the candidate and the parish community, but it also makes a statement about the scandal of disunity in the Church; it makes a statement about separated ecclesial Communities; it makes a statement about the very nature of the Church.

For this reason the rite uses the word “often” when it talks about a less public celebration of this rite. “The person to be received into full communion should be consulted about the form of reception” (389.2).

Discussion Questions
1. How have candidates for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church within your community been made aware of the significance of their baptism?
2. How is the fact of their baptism asserted in the scheduling of the various rites?
3. How is the fact of their baptism asserted in the pattern of their formation?
4. What kind of discernment process is used to develop a path for the formation process?
5. How are they integrated into the fabric of the community?
6. How are candidates for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church consulted with regard to the form of reception?
7. Have you ever celebrated this rite outside the Easter Vigil? Outside the full Sunday assembly? Outside mass?
8. How does your community determine the validity of confirmation celebrated in separated ecclesial Communities?
Appendix I:

Celebration at the Easter Vigil

of the Sacraments of Initiation and of
the Rite of Reception into the
Full Communion of the Catholic Church

(418–451)

About the Notes

If you only have time to read one paragraph …

Read paragraph 418. Read it two or three times. The more time we spend with paragraph 418, the deeper our sense that it is trying to talk us out of using this rite. In order to adequately address the pastoral and theological considerations to which the paragraph refers, significant and honest discernment is absolutely required.

Was the candidate truly uncatechized when he/she first asked to be received?

Could the celebration of reception in this manner with this candidate possibly take on any appearance of triumphalism?

Is the candidate comfortable with celebrating the rite in this manner?

These are the key questions in the decision to include Christians baptized in separate ecclesial Communities in this rite. Candidates who, because they come to the Catholic Church already catechized, do not need a lengthy period of formation before celebrating the rite of reception probably should not be received at the Easter Vigil. (For ritual affirmation of this point, notice that this combined form of celebration assumes that the candidate has not previously been confirmed; a person confirmed in a separated ecclesial Community may be assumed to have been catechized.) Candidates who have been active in parish life prior to asking to be received into full communion may not wish to be received in such a public manner. The ecumenical climate in a particular place and time may also mitigate against celebrating reception into full communion in this manner.

Readers are strongly encouraged to read the material on reception into full communion and on the sacraments of initiation provided on pp. 172–173 and pp. 160–164 respectively in this issue of the Bulletin.

Things People Often Miss

Because of the highly public nature of this celebration, it is wise to confirm with diocesan authorities the need to celebrate reception and the need to celebrate confirmation with particular candidates.

About the Ritual Texts

Pastoral Wisdom for Celebrating

To reduce stress levels that may be caused by having to memorize the profession of faith, an alternative form is provided in paragraph 442A. Note that, regardless of the number of candidates for reception, the response must be in the singular: “I do,” rather than “We do.”

Discussion Questions

See discussion questions on pp. 173 and 164.

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1 See paragraph 388 [Latin R2].
2 Paragraph 406 [Latin R17] indicates that in some limited cases the candidate for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church will have already been validly confirmed. Consult the local diocesan ecumenical authority for more information on particular cases.
Appendix 3: Other Rites for Use in Canada

Introduction (455–462)'

If you only have time to read two paragraphs ...

Paragraph 455 points out that the rites in Appendix 3 may be used with the baptized whether that baptism was within the Catholic community or within another ecclesial Community. It also indicates that these specifically Canadian rites grew out of the pastoral notes found in chapters four (376–386) and five (387–399).

Paragraph 460 outlines a strategy for honouring the fact of baptism in the lives of those seeking to complete initiation and those coming into the full communion of the Catholic Church. Transitional rites, those marking a change in the nature of preparation (the Rite of Welcoming the Candidates and the Rite of Calling Candidates to Lenten Renewal) are celebrated publicly in recognition of the ecclesial/communal nature of the process. Rites during the formation process (prayers for strength, blessings, celebrations of the word, presentations, penance services) are celebrated less publicly. Read in conjunction with paragraph 383, this paragraph tells us that the presentations are only celebrated if the Creed and/or Lord’s Prayer have not been a part of the life of the candidates up to this point.

Things People Often Miss

Paragraph 456 makes it clear that these rites are suitable only for the uncatechized. The rites are designed to serve the pastoral needs of the baptized. If individuals are not in need of these rites, the rites should not be celebrated.

Other Comments

The rest of the notes in this introductory section of Appendix 3 are predicated on the above three. Only the uncatechized require a significant period of time for formation. The duration and nature of the period that precedes completion of initiation or reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church will (certainly should!) vary widely from individual to individual depending on the extent of their involvement with the Christian community and the nature of the catechetical formation received in the baptizing Community and by means of life experience.

Discussion Questions

1. How does your community discern whether a candidate for completion of initiation or reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church is “catechized” or “uncatechized”? (Consider the areas of doctrinal teaching, spiritual lifestyle, community integration, liturgical rites and apprenticeship in apostolic outreach.)

2. How does your community go about shaping a formation path for each candidate? (Consider needs in the areas of doctrinal teaching, spiritual lifestyle, community integration, liturgical rites and apprenticeship in apostolic outreach.)

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1 These rites are similar, but not necessarily identical, to the adaptations in Part 2, Chapter 4 of the US edition (411 ff.).
Rite of Welcoming Candidates
for Confirmation and Eucharist
(and Candidates for Reception into the
Full Communion of the Catholic Church)
(463–487)

If you only have time to read one paragraph ...

There are only four paragraphs (463–466) of pastoral notes dealing with this rite and each contains essential guidance for those involved in bringing the already baptized to the eucharistic table. Paragraph 465 underlines an important principle that must become part of the fabric of our being if our work with the baptized is to be truly respectful of their status in the community. Here we read that not only are candidates for the completion of initiation and candidates for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church "technically" different from catechumens, they are profoundly and essentially different from them. They are not only embraced by the Church, they are members of the community; they are members of the body of Christ, members of that Church which embraces the catechumens. What the baptized ask of us is our assistance to live the fullness of that identity in our midst.

Things People Often Miss

Paragraph 464 also deserves a close examination. At first glance it may appear to be a mere repetition of paragraph 463. However, an important subtlety is lurking in this fine print. There is a deliberate differentiation between catechized and uncatechized; this rite is for the uncatechized. As the reader will see, the ritual texts in this section of the book are clearly for people who will require a significant period of formation before they are brought to the table.

The important distinction between catechized and uncatechized gives us the freedom to omit the rite in some cases where it may seem silly to celebrate it. Of course, we must read the word "catechized" here in its widest possible sense: all four dimensions of "catechesis" outlined for catechumens in paragraph 75 (doctrinal teaching, lifestyle orientation, liturgical formation and apostolic apprenticeship) must be addressed. Perhaps the candidate has been participating actively in parish life alongside a fully initiated Catholic partner for several years; their formation period will probably be quite short. Perhaps the candidate has been active in "a separate ecclesial Community" that has provided a strong catechetical foundation from a theological perspective very close to Catholic theology; the formation period may, therefore, be quite short and quite different from the first candidate described.

This rite is designed to serve a pastoral need—the need of the candidate to be embraced by the local community, not the parish's need to celebrate a rite of initiation. If the candidate does not need the rite, don't celebrate it!

Other Comments

Paragraph 466 may be controversial, but is well founded. The language of the text is clear and emphatic. In Canada, this rite is not to be celebrated together with the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens. If those guiding the process have rooted this process—coming to the table—in the fact of the person's baptism (regardless of how dim and distant a memory that event may be), it will be obvious that the two rites themselves (Rite of Acceptance vs. Rite of Welcoming) are by their nature too different to be celebrated together. If we are to respect both the people and the sacraments, we must separate these rites.
Of course, if our process of receiving seekers is year-round and on-going and if we are genuinely treating persons as individuals rather than as "members of this year's group" the chances of having people ready to celebrate both rites on the same day will be quite small.

The Heart of the Action

Although the rite is named as a rite of welcoming, the language of welcoming is quite muted in the texts provided. The word "welcome" is used only in the invitation to the celebration of the liturgy of the word. Is there other evidence of welcome and hospitality? Yes. First, the rite gives the presider and candidates the freedom to design an opening dialogue that fits the particular circumstances of the candidate. It's not simply a matter of "this is what we offer, do you want it?" Rather, following the example of Christ encountering the blind beggar and speaking in the name of Christ, we first ask how we can help. Second, the whole community declares its commitment to help. Third, the prayer following the community's affirmation gives thanks and praise to God for the gift of these individuals. Finally, the community, through the ministry of the presider and the sponsor, acknowledges our shared baptismal identity by both declaration and ritual action.

Pastoral Wisdom for Celebrating

Notice that the texts presume a faith that lacks maturity and a lifestyle in need of formation. The presider's words in the declaration of intention and the recommended intercessions are particularly oriented to this assumption. If these do not fit the particular individuals who have asked to come to the table, the texts must be carefully adjusted to reflect the reality; or the rite may be completely inappropriate to the circumstances and omitted.

To appreciate the true meaning and nature of this rite, set aside some time to read the texts of the Rite of Welcoming and the Rite of Acceptance in parallel. Reflect on the differences you find. It may also be useful to do some mystagogical work with the candidates following this celebration. In addition to forming candidates in the habits and strategies of mystagogical reflection, this practice may help parish staff to get in touch with how the texts/actions are experienced by those for whom they are designed and celebrated.

At paragraphs 484 and 485 the rite, as provided, makes, for the first time, a distinction between those baptized in the Catholic community and those seeking reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church. Although neither is invited to the table, Catholics are not dismissed before the liturgy of the eucharist, while others are. This writer sees no theological foundation for this practice. It would seem more appropriate to make the decision regarding whether to dismiss baptized persons on the basis of previous exposure to the good news proclaimed in scripture. Does the candidate's personal interaction with the good news proclaimed in scripture need forming or re-shaping according to the Catholic tradition?

Discussion Questions

1. How does your parish show baptized persons that you respect the fact of their baptism as well as any other Church involvement that may have been a part of their life-journey before presenting themselves for initiation within your parish?
2. How does your parish determine whether candidates need to celebrate this rite?
3. How does your parish determine candidates' readiness to celebrate this rite?
4. How does your parish determine when to celebrate this rite?
5. If you have read the Rite of Welcoming Candidates for Confirmation and Eucharist and the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens in parallel, what differences did you notice? Why are these differences necessary?
Rites during the Period of Christian Formation:
Celebrations of God's Word, Prayers for Strength, and Prayers of Blessing for the Baptized (488–493)

The Heart of the Action
Where the baptized have need for a significant period of Christian formation in preparation for sharing at the eucharistic table, three kinds of liturgical rites are provided to assist in their progress: celebrations of God's word, prayers for strength, and prayers of blessing. Celebrations of God's word are given pride of place among these rites. Prayers of blessing and prayers for strength should be celebrated within these celebrations of God's word.

Pastoral Wisdom for Celebrating
Participation in celebrations of God's word will be especially important for those with limited experience of Catholic worship, but only if the structure and character Catholic liturgical celebration is respected. Much can be accomplished by consistently using the ritual elements and patterns of the liturgy of the word at mass.

Readers are again encouraged to take the time to do a parallel reading of the Rites Belonging to the Period of the Catechumenate and the Rites during Christian Formation. Notice that the text provided for the first prayer for strength is different in character both from the second option and from those recommended from the Book of Blessings. The first sets up a praying "us" and a prayed for "them"; while the second uses the language of the inclusive sense of "we" throughout. The decision as to which type of prayer is needed must be made on a case-by-case, occasion-by-occasion basis.

Notice the clear difference in what is asked of God in a minor exorcism and in a prayer for strength. Also notice that the blessings sought for catechumens are oriented toward the graces of the sacraments of initiation, whereas those sought for the baptized are oriented to intensifying an already existing Christian life.

Discussion Questions
1. How often do candidates for completion of initiation and/or reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church experience liturgical celebrations of God's word?
2. How often are prayers of blessings a part of these celebrations?
3. How would you decide between using an inclusive "we" blessing prayer and an exclusive "we" blessing prayer?
4. How often are prayers for strength a part of these celebrations?
Rite of Calling Candidates to Lenten Renewal
(494–509)

If you only have time to read one paragraph ...
Read paragraph 494. This paragraph explains the thrust and intent of the rite. It is oriented to preparation for the renewal of baptismal vows, something to which the whole Church is invited at the beginning of Lent. In this rite we are calling candidates for completion of initiation and/or reception into full communion to do what baptized people do during Lent.

Things People Often Miss
Although this rite is superficially similar to the Rite of Election, both the name and action of this rite hint at the critical difference between the two. Both involve a public acknowledgement of readiness; both involve a mandate to prepare. The Rite of Election is more strongly flavoured by the first, the Rite of Calling to Lenten Renewal to the second. This is made clear in the action of the rites: catechumens are declared “elect” and are invited to enter their names in the book; candidates for completion of initiation and/or reception into full communion are simply invited to live Lent—the baptized are never asked to sign a book to begin Lenten renewal. The texts of the Prayer over the Candidates (505) and the Prayer over the Elect also bear out this contrast. Catechumens are preparing to undergo a passage which the baptized have already undertaken. Catechumens are preparing to die with Christ; the baptized have already done so; they already share his new life; they are already Christian.

Notice also that no solemn oral declaration is asked of the candidates as is done of catechumens at the Rite of Election. Catechumens respond to the call of Christ in the Rite of Election; candidates for full communion respond to the call of the community in the Rite of Calling to Renewal. They respond to that call by their Lenten observance.

Pastoral Wisdom for Celebrating
There is no stipulation in these notes that this rite be celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent. Neither is there a stipulation that this rite is properly celebrated by the bishop. Furthermore, there is a prohibition against a combined celebration.

Taking into account the many indicators in the preceding discussion, it is obvious that this rite is offered at most as a parish celebration. Since the rite is intended to invite the candidates to Lenten observance and renewal, since it cannot be celebrated on Ash Wednesday, and since it may be difficult to celebrate it on the First Sunday of Lent if the bishop has delegated pastors to celebrate the rite in the parish, the Rite of Calling Candidates to Lenten Renewal is probably best celebrated on the Sunday preceding Ash Wednesday. In this way candidates participate in the Ash Wednesday liturgy in response to the call of the rite.

1 “Since you have already heard the call of Christ, you must now express your response to that call clearly and in the presence of the whole Church” (119).
2 “We invite you to be one with us during this lenten season” (503).
3 The fact of the candidates’ previous baptism precludes the involvement of the bishop in this stage of initiation. Furthermore, involving the bishop in the rites leading up to the act of reception into full communion would violate the spirit of paragraph 389.2: “Any appearance of triumphalism should be carefully avoided.”
4 See 389.2: “Often it will be preferable to celebrate the Mass with only a few relatives and friends.”
Discussion Questions

1. Read the Rite of Calling Candidates to Lenten Renewal in parallel with the Rite of Election. What do you notice?

2. When does your parish celebrate the Rite of Calling Candidates to Lenten Renewal? Why is it scheduled in this way?

3. Where is the rite celebrated? Who presides? Why?

Presentations of the Creed and of the Lord’s Prayer

(510–521)

If you only have time to read one paragraph ...

There are no notes specific to the presentation rites for the baptized. It is important though to return to paragraph 456. These rites are only to be used with the uncatechized. Those who have already received the Creed and/or the Lord’s Prayer from their baptizing ecclesial Community, whether Roman Catholic or not, and whether formally or not, do not receive them again.

The Heart of the Action

These rites are virtually identical to those for the elect.1 (Only the Prayers over the Candidates/Elect differ.) The heart of the Presentation of the Creed is the community’s recitation of it. The heart of the Presentation of the Lord’s Prayer is the proclamation of the gospel story of Jesus’ teaching of the Lord’s Prayer.

Pastoral Wisdom for Celebrating

Notice that at no point do either of the texts suggest that candidates be presented with written copies, certificates, posters, etc. These are texts that are to be written on the heart. If certain individuals need study texts these may be supplied informally following the celebration.

Discussion Questions

1. How would one discern whether it would be pastorally appropriate to celebrate these rites with particular individuals?

2. How would one discern at what point in the formation process to celebrate these rites with baptized people?

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1 It may be useful to read the article about the presentation rites for the elect found on p. 156 of this issue of the Bulletin.
Penitential Services
and the Sacrament of Penance
(522–530)

If you only have time to read one paragraph ...

Read paragraph 522. Several important points are embedded in these three short sentences. Penitential services may be celebrated more than once during the period of formation. Although the last sentence of the paragraph indicates that these celebrations are meant for the final days of preparation, uncatechized adults who are undergoing a significant period of formation may benefit from such celebrations as they experience deepening awareness of the call that baptism makes on daily life choices. This last sentence in paragraph 522 together with paragraph 526 also highlights the fact that a public rite within mass paralleling a rite of scrutiny is inappropriate for the baptized.

Paragraph 528 is in need of serious reflection. The implications of giving the sacrament of penance the prominence attributed to it in this paragraph are manifold. First, for candidates for reception into full communion it may be seen to imply that membership in a separated ecclesial community was somehow sinful. Second, for all candidates it skews the thrust of the formation process away from the sharing at the table and the life around that table, and toward a personalized, privatized, rather Jansenist spirituality. Third, such a perspective denigrates the renewal of baptismal vows, which for the baptized is the true parallel of the sacrament. Finally, it makes what is offered as an optional rite into a central goal of the formation process. Certainly it may be foreseen that a rich and thorough formation process for an uncatechized baptized person would logically include a celebration of the sacrament in the closing days of the formation period, but it cannot be given the prominence implied here.

Other Comments
Paragraph 530 seems to place the sacrament within the preparation activities of Holy Saturday. The recitation of the Creed by uncatechized persons who received it for the first time during Lent is mentioned here as a part of this day and is not a necessary part of the celebration of the sacrament. The presentation of the candle is appropriate in the context of this final preparation phase if candidates have no such token from their baptism celebration and if they are instructed to bring it for use at the Easter Vigil.

Pastoral Wisdom for Celebrating
Readers are referred to Bulletin #164 for a thorough discussion of penance services and the celebration of the sacrament of penance.

Discussion Questions
1. How does one discern the timing of penance services throughout the period of formation in preparation for full membership in the Church?
2. How are candidates for completion of initiation and candidates for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church prepared for the experience of the sacrament of penance?

Readers are alerted to the unfortunate choice of the word “elect” in paragraph 522 to refer to candidates for completion of initiation and for reception into full communion. The term “elect” is only properly used in reference to unbaptized people in the final days of their period of pre-baptismal formation.
Music and Liturgy
Did you ever notice how many organizations there are for ministers of music and how many individuals are involved in them? No other lay liturgical ministry is so self-organized. And have you ever noticed how many liturgists also have a background in music? I believe this says something about the depth of the relationship between the celebration of liturgy and music. I believe it means that some day mass without music will be considered as unusual as mass without a congregation.

Music is intrinsic to our liturgy. Music has helped to give our liturgy its shape and form. Acclamations, litanies ("Lord, have mercy," the prayer of the faithful [general intercessions], and "Lamb of God"), psalms, and hymns ("Glory to God") are musical texts demanding to be wed to music. Indeed there is little in our liturgy that cannot be sung; this is because our liturgy is by its very nature musical.

A Call to Celebration
Music is an essential medium for our worship because Christian worship is celebration—celebration of the highest form. The Sunday eucharist, Easter, Christmas, weddings, and even funerals and the season of Lent are all occasions of celebration. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy tells us that liturgical celebration is the source and summit of our life as Church (10). Celebration is the ultimate purpose of our life as Church; and music is the medium of our celebration. The task of music is to call us to a spirit of celebration.

A Call to Unity
Celebration is the source and summit of our life, but our individual lives between our liturgical gatherings are quite different. In our communities we may speak many different languages; in our politics we vote many different parties. Yet in our celebration we sing with one voice; we sing one faith. The task of music is to call us to oneness.

A Call to Life
Our society draws us into a superficial lifestyle. Twentieth-century culture defines us in terms of numerous roles rather than as whole persons. We can become alienated, disintegrated, burned out and empty. Music demands our whole person. It helps break down the inner barriers that both protect us from the world and isolate us from others; it opens us to the truth. As the text by Fred Pratt Green says, music shows us "new dimensions" and moves us "to a more profound alleluia." (See CBW III #509.) The task of music is to call us to fullness of life.

Musicians: Ministers of the Church's Song
Ministers of music are called to bring forth the gift of music within the Church, to develop musical skills as far as possible, to learn about music, to steep themselves in the liturgy by study and personal reflection in preparation to serve the community. But ministers of music are called far beyond this.

The Church has charged the music of its liturgy with the task of giving voice to the community's prayer in such a way that it brings the diverse members of the assembly to ever-increasing unity. So, to a great extent parish musicians have the responsibility of helping the parish to embody and strengthen its unity during the liturgical celebrations. An oft-neglected aspect of music ministry is this ministry of unity.

In communities that regularly have more than one celebration of eucharist per
Music Notes • The Ministry of the Music and the Ministry of the Musician

weekend and, therefore, probably have more than one music group, this ministry of unity requires close collaboration among the groups to effectively unite the parish. It is imperative that the groups work together to establish a well-defined body of liturgical music, that is chosen because it is written with the possibility of both keyboard and guitar accompaniments (especially acclamations) and will serve as the core of the parish’s common repertoire. This shared repertoire will help unify the parish and will facilitate community worship on special occasions when there is only one celebration and all the groups combine forces to support the assembly’s song: Paschal Triduum, the dedication of a new building, the parish patronal feast, etc. Each group is free to expand the repertoire as they see fit for the particular sub-group to whom they minister, but they must make sure that the entire parish is well acquainted with the common core. 

Music for the Sunday Assembly:
Year A: Advent and Christmas Seasons

Liturgy Office, Diocese of Hamilton, ON

The following lays out a schedule for the best placement of each piece in the full Advent repertoire in CBW III in the Sunday assemblies of Advent, Year A. In an assembly of reluctant, insecure or inexperienced singers, it is unwise to vary the music to this extent. Advent is only four Sundays long; this does not allow much time either for boredom with repeated songs or for the learning of new ones. Often it is wise to repeat at least one song on each of the Sundays of the season as a way of uniting the season musically.

The vast Christmas repertoire is also listed according the most appropriate place to use each piece.

Several pieces have been suggested for the same moment in the same liturgy. Some judgement (pastoral and theological, as well as musical) must be exercised when choosing among suggestions for the same liturgical moment. (Articles meant to assist in this task will appear in future issues of the Bulletin.)

If this is the year to introduce a new song, use this listing as an aid for selecting one that will best serve your community and begin teaching it well, in advance of the season.

Introductory Rites

Advent Wreath

The use of the Advent wreath in the church is entirely optional. It should never become the focal point of the celebration, nor should the rites surrounding it dominate or overshadow the gathering rites or the celebration of God’s word. On the First Sunday of

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Advent, one candle may be lit prior to the celebration. Following the greeting, the wreath may be simply blessed, and penitential rite celebrated as usual. On subsequent Sundays, the appropriate number of candles is lit prior to the celebration and the introductory rites take place as usual. There is no need for any music connected with the Advent wreath; use of such music would certainly distort the introductory rites of the mass.

- Advent 230 or 232 Lord, Have Mercy - Litany
- Christmas Season 239 or 245 Gloria
- Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

The Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling with water may be used during celebrations of this day. One of the following may accompany the sprinkling:

- 236 May This Water Keep Us Aware
- 237 With Joy You Will Draw Water

Seasonal Psalms
Where singing the proper psalm of each Sunday would be discouraging for the assembly or overly taxing to the ability of the cantor, a seasonal refrain may be used with the psalm of the day. Though the preference is for the proper psalm, use of the seasonal refrain may also be used to unite the season musically.

- Advent 15, 16, and 23
- Christmas Season 29A, 29B

Communion Songs
608 Now in This Banquet (note optional refrain especially for Advent)
312 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
(an Advent choice for the most insecure singers)
597 Bread of Life
611 Take and Eat

Other Processionals
Editor's Picks
- Advent
  303 Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn
  315 The Advent of Our God (TUNE: FESTAL SONG, 302)
- Christmas Season
  345 City of God
  346 In the Darkness Shines the Splendour
  303 Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

1st Sunday of Advent
* 304' Awake, Awake: Fling off the Night
  306 Come, O Long Expected Jesus
  341 Arise and Shine

Suggestions for alternative melodies may be found in the metrical index (CBW III Choir and Instrumental eds. #700)
*307 Creator of the Stars of Night
309 Listen, My People
*318 The King Shall Come
305 Be Light for Our Eyes
310 O Come, Divine Messiah!

2nd Sunday of Advent
*302 Arise, Your Light Is Come!
308 Every Valley
477 God of Day and God of Darkness (vs. 1, 3, 4)
314 God of All People
319 Wait for the Lord
359 Come to the Waters (refrain 3)
317 Prepare the Way
433 The Voice of God

3rd Sunday of Advent
303 Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn
305 Be Light for Our Eyes
433 The Voice of God
301 Advent Antiphon
309 Listen, My People
359 Come to the Waters (refrain 3)
310 O Come, Divine Messiah!
345 City of God
557 Let Heaven Rejoice

4th Sunday of Advent
312 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
335 The People Who in Darkness Walked (vs. 1, 2, 4, 5)
464 The God Whom Earth and Sea and Sky
*318 The King Shall Come
456 Joseph, Be Our Guide and Pattern
505 Disciple's Song
575 Tell Out, My Soul

Christmas
In selecting music for celebrations for Christmas masses, musicians will need to collaborate with the pastor and liturgy committee if the scripture readings for the various celebrations are a factor in music selection. Note that there are particular readings for the Mass During the Night, the Mass at Dawn, and the Mass During the Day; alternately, one set of readings may be used at all Christmas celebrations; in fact, readings may be chosen individually.

320 Angels We Have Heard on High
323 Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

Preparation
Entrance
Entrance
Preparation
Preparation
Recessional
Recessional
Preparation
Preparation
Recessional
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Congratulations Pat Byrne

On June 18, 2001, Monsignor Patrick Byrne was one of three recipients of the Notre Dame Centre for Pastoral Liturgy’s “Spirit and Truth Award” presented at the opening of this year’s Pastoral Liturgy Conference. This is the third year in which the centre has recognized Liturgy network members whose work stands as a testimony to those “unsung” efforts needed to bring worship to life. Anne Koester read the following introduction:

“Msgr. Pat Byrne has been a presbyter of the Diocese of Peterborough in Ontario, Canada, since 1956. He says that his first round of liturgical education occurred in the spring of 1950, when he read through the first 22 volumes of Orate Fratres (the journal now known as Worship). He also attended the Liturgical Weeks from 1955 to 1958.

“In 1968, he became a consultor for the International Committee on English in the Liturgy. A year later, he edited the white books for marriage and the baptism of children. From October 1971 to January 1988, he served a editorial assistant of the National Liturgical Office in Ottawa for the English-speaking Church in Canada. During this sixteen-year period, Pat edited and produced 215 ritual books and publications about liturgy. As editor of the National Bulletin on Liturgy, he produced 80 issues, with more than 4700 pages. Over the years, he has also contributed to four anthologies in England, Canada, and the U.S., and has worked with other Churches in the preparation of their liturgical books.


“Pat is a member of the North American Academy of Liturgy and Societas Liturgica. He served as president and board member of the Canadian Liturgical Society, and was a member of the international Consultation on Common Texts while it was preparing the Revised Common Lectionary and other books. He was also a member of the English Language Liturgical Consultation during and after its preparation of Praying Together (1988).

“He continues to serve the Church as chaplain to the local branch of the Royal Canadian Legion.

“Those who nominated Msgr. Byrne for the Spirit and Truth Award call him a ‘great gift’ to the Church in Canada, a ‘great pastoral liturgist,’ and a wonderful mentor to young liturgists.”
Music Notes • Sunday Bulletin Announcements about Liturgical Singing

Sunday Bulletin Announcements about Liturgical Singing

• Why do we have music at mass?
Have you ever asked yourself that question? Many people seem to have the idea that God loves quiet and hates noise of any kind. Yet over and over again the psalms urge, "Make a joyful noise to God." We contemplate God in silence; we praise God with joyful noise.

When we gather before God in the Sunday assembly, it is because God has called us together for praise. "From age to age you gather a people to yourself, so that from east to west a perfect offering may be made to the glory of your name." So go ahead; don’t be afraid. Sing your heart out!

• Why should I sing at mass?
Isn’t that the choir’s job? Isn’t singing at mass just for people who sound great when they sing? Can a voice like mine be pleasing to God? Well, if God created your voice it must be pleasing to God. But more importantly you sing because since the day of your baptism it has been your job and your joy to sing the praise of God. We are all saved by God. We all share in the new life God gives us. We are members of the body of Christ. We all give voice to the joy of new life. “And so, with all the choirs of angels in heaven we proclaim your glory and join in their unending hymn of praise.”

• Why do we sing so much at mass?
Actually, most of the mass is song. The Lord, have mercy, the general intercessions and the Lamb of God are litanies, sung patterned prayer in alternated between cantor and assembly. The Glory to God is a hymn originally composed for Christmas midnight mass in Rome several centuries ago. The Book of Psalms is the songbook of the bible. Acclamations are eager shouts of joy; what better way to express them than in rousing, enthusiastic song!

Singing together unites both our voices and our hearts. It is for this purpose that God has brought us together: to become one with Christ and with each other in glorious praise of God. "Father, all-powerful and ever-living God, we do well always and everywhere to give you thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

• How do we choose songs for Sunday mass?
It’s not an easy task to choose music for the Sunday eucharist. We make certain the songs we choose are songs that clearly express our praise of God and the faith of the Church. We look for familiar, joyful songs that people of this parish have shown they know and can sing easily, so that everyone can sing. We try to choose songs that are uplifting and easy to sing, but not childish or boring. Sometimes one of our choices can reflect the same images as the scripture readings.

Sometimes our parish needs to learn a new song. Perhaps our songs are growing stale; perhaps our enthusiasm for them is waning. Perhaps there is a spot in the mass in which the songs we have been singing are less than ideal. Which songs do you enjoy singing at mass?

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God" (Colossians 3.16).
Incongruities: Who We Are and How We Pray, edited by Timothy Fitzgerald and David A. Lysik, (Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications, 2000); 60 pp., $9.00 US.

The 1999 Notre Dame Pastoral Liturgy Conference was an exploration of the space between the liturgical visions that emerged from the Second Vatican Council and our experience of liturgical celebrations at the dawn of a new millennium, almost forty years later. This small collection of essays represents three of the principal addresses given during the 1999 conference. In the first essay, Peter Phan offers a challenging reflection on the liturgy as "the source and summit" of the Church's activity. He invites his audience to consider the "liturgy of life" as the original liturgy, which is made explicit and intensified in the Church's liturgical rites. In the second essay, Melissa Musick Nussbaum reflects on the relationship between the family table and the Church's eucharistic table. Speaking as both a parent and educator, she challenges us to reconsider our present practice of not communicating infants and young children. In the final essay, Richard Vosko identifies some of the tasks that lie before us as we shape appropriate environments in which to celebrate the Church's liturgy.

The essays in this collection raise important issues that need to be addressed now and in the years ahead. Recommended for all who look forward to the day when the liturgical vision of Vatican II will be realized.

Guide for Lay Preachers, by Patricia A. Parachini, (Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications, 2000); 58 pp., $5.00 US.

Part of Liturgy Training Publications' Basics of Ministry series, this booklet offers some foundational insights regarding the ministry of preaching, and in particular, preaching by lay persons. The author points out the renewed emphasis on the proclamation of the word in liturgical celebrations in the post-Vatican II Church, and offers a brief historical survey of the practice of lay preaching. This booklet outlines the nature of liturgical preaching and offers helpful information regarding preparation and the skills required for performing this ministry. The author relies heavily on the work of Edward Foley (Preaching Basics - see Bulletin #161 for review). A brief discussion on the spirituality of the preacher concludes this work.

This booklet is recommended for all preachers - ordained and lay - who wish to improve their skills in proclaiming the word of God. The "Communications Criteria for Preaching," found in the appendix, is particularly helpful for homily evaluations.

Guide for Ushers and Greeters, by Lawrence E. Mick, (Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications, 1997); 72 pp., $5.00 US.

This booklet, which is part of Liturgy Training Publications' Basics of Ministry series offers an excellent and comprehensive overview of the ministry of ushers and greeters. The author reviews the biblical-historical foundations of this ministry in the Church and identifies the attitudes necessary for the exercise of this important ministry. He discusses various possible duties that may be assigned to ministers of hospitality and offers suggestions regarding challenging aspects of this ministry. Each section of the booklet concludes with helpful discussion questions.

This booklet is highly recommended for ushers and greeters and all who assist ministers of hospitality in carrying out their important role in liturgical celebrations.

Tell Me Your Name: Images of God in the Bible, by Arthur E. Zannoni, (Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications, 2000); 100 pp., $12.00 US.

This book is an excellent resource for anyone who desires to understand the images and names for God in the Bible. The author carefully explores the many images and names for God in the Hebrew Scriptures, offering solid exegetical background for each. He also examines the image of Jesus in the New Testament and the images he presents of God in his teaching and parables. Finally, the author offers a brief series of reflections on the biblical images of the Holy Spirit. Helpful discussion questions are included at the end of each chapter.
Arthur Zannoni brings together a wealth of insights from various sources to provide a comprehensive treatment of the images of God in the bible. This work is highly recommended as a foundational reference for understanding the biblical language for God and some of the issues related to the language of our contemporary liturgical prayer.


This is a must for every "RCIA team" member! Guided by the testimonies of the great preachers and writers of the Christian tradition, Paul Turner identifies in chronological order the ritual patterns that have shaped the initiatory practice of the Church. In each chapter the author discusses the catechumens' initial interest in Christian initiation, their catechesis, preparation for baptism, celebration of baptism, and life after initiation. A helpful point form summary concludes each chapter. Quotations from foundational documents, maps and photographs of significant places and artifacts enrich the text.

This scholarly, yet very accessible work is highly recommended for all who minister with adults on their journey of Christian initiation.

The Color of Light: Commissioning Stained Glass for a Church, by Sarah Hall, (Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications, 1999); 101 pp., $29.95 US.

Sarah Hall, a respected Canadian stained glass artist, has set out to "honor the beauty of stained glass, to recognize the transformational role it can play in church building and to help parishes, architects and clergy to commission beautiful and meaningful stained glass for places of worship" (from the introduction). This small soft cover volume does precisely this. Sarah Hall explains the art of fashioning stained glass, offers an overview of the history of stained glass in churches, and outlines a clear and straightforward process for commissioning stained glass for a worship space. In addition to the wealth of practical information contained in this book, the reader will be spiritually nourished by the many wonderful pictures of stained glass that grace the pages of this book. Recommended for all diocesan and parish building committees and those interested in the arts as they enrich the Church's liturgical prayer.

Children's Choir Basics, by David T. Nastal, (Portland, OR: Pastoral Press); 1999, 112 pp., $11.95 US.

The author of this book knows what he is talking about! He is currently in his fourteenth year as music director in a parish where over 200 children between the ages of five and fifteen are enrolled in choir programs. In this helpful book, David Nastal discusses issues related to beginning a children's choral program, offers helpful tips for rehearsing with children and developing a choral sound. He also comments on repertoire and the involvement of volunteers in maintaining children's choirs. The book includes appendices that direct the reader to further resources to assist them in building choral music programs with children.

This handbook is recommended for children's choir directors, music ministers, pastors and parents who wish to engage children as integral members of the worshipping community through music ministry.


This book offers a comprehensive overview of Christian marriage based on the dialogue of the Canadian Council of Churches' Commission on Faith and Witness. The essays in this collection highlight common beliefs regarding marriage and the significant differences that exist between the Churches.

In the second part of the book each of the major Christian Churches offers a succinct summary of their theological understanding of marriage, their expectations and requirements of couples, an outline and commentary on the order of service, and reflections on the pastoral approach they take in responding to couples in special circumstances.

This book is recommended as a welcome and informative resource for pastors and those engaged in marriage preparation.
The Singing Thing: A Case for Congregational Song, by John Bell, (Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, Inc.); 2000, 158 pp., $15 US.

This small book, the first of a proposed two-volume work, addresses the "whys" of congregational singing. (The second volume will offer reflections on the "hows" of the assembly's song.) Written by a well-known hymn writer and composer from the Iona Community in Scotland, this series of reflections is filled with delightful anecdotes and wise insights regarding why people sing ... and why some people do not sing. John Bell provides pastoral musicians with a solid foundation for understanding the important place of congregational song in liturgical celebration.

This book is highly recommended for all pastoral musicians who desire nothing less than the sound of the entire assembly singing during the liturgy. They will be affirmed in their desire to make music and encouraged in their ministry.

Theology and the Arts: Encountering God through Music, Art and Rhetoric, by Richard Viladesau, (New York: Paulist Press); 2000, 270 pp., $17.95 US.

The author of this scholarly work invites the reader to explore the relationships between theology and aesthetics. Viladesau writes with the conviction that beauty is a form of divine revelation and that the arts (music, visual art and rhetoric) are therefore powerful means by which the divine may be revealed. Of special value to pastors and liturgists is his treatment of the art of preaching.

The Last Word

On a Practical Matter

Douglas Crosby

The Problem

With the proliferation of personal fragrances (perfumes, colognes, after shave, etc.) for women and men, has come a new and related concern for our liturgies. Many of these fragrances cause people with particular sensitivities to suffer allergic reactions. Meetings, banquets and other special events are often declared to be "scent free," alerting individuals not to wear their favourite perfume. Increasingly the choir area of the parish church is also being declared scent free—choir members can't simply move away if the person singing next to them is wearing an allergen. Ordained and unordained liturgical ministers are well advised to take note.

This problem is compounded since those who have the habit of wearing such fragrances may use their hands to apply the lotion, so hands, too, become perfumed.

The sacred host can pick up the fragrance from the fingers of the minister. Smell becomes taste when the host is consumed, and what may have been a pleasing fragrance can have a revolting taste.

Possible Remedies

Those who distribute communion should wash their hands with soap and warm water in the sacristy before mass begins to ensure that none of the fragrant substance remains. Better still, avoid using such fragrances at all and wash your hands. (Needless to say, all ministers of communion should remain vigilant with regard to hygiene throughout the celebration.)

This may sound like elementary advice for an advanced liturgical publication like the National Bulletin on Liturgy, but sometimes such notice is necessary. A word to the wise.
Your Turn

Got something to say about the National Bulletin on Liturgy? Topics you think people need help with? Ideas for helpful things we could put in the Bulletin? Let us know how we can be more helpful. Just copy the form below or use your own stationery to send us your thoughts about this or any other issue of the Bulletin or just about the Bulletin in general.

National Liturgy Office
90 Parent Avenue, Ottawa, ON K1N 7B1

About This Issue
Which articles did you find most helpful or informative? ________________
Which were neither? ________________
What do you think should have been included and wasn't? ________________
Would you recommend this issue of the Bulletin to others? ________________

About Bulletin # _______
Which articles did you find most helpful or informative? ________________
Which were neither? ________________
What do you think should have been included and wasn't? ________________
Would you recommend this issue of the Bulletin to others? ________________

About the Bulletin in General
Which issues of the Bulletin have you found most helpful or informative? ________________
Which were neither? ________________

What topics should we address in future issues? (Be as specific as you can about questions and areas of concern.) ________________
Any other ideas about what might be helpful to readers? ________________

The more we know about our readers, the more we can serve their needs. We would appreciate it if you would provide the following information:

Reader Information
What, if any, is your involvement in liturgical ministry? ________________
Describe your pastoral situation:
• parish, diocesan, religious community, other? ________________
• size of above community? ________________
• rural or urban? ________________
• Sunday worship led by priest? ________________
• frequency of Sunday worship without a priest? ________________

How long have you been receiving the National Bulletin on Liturgy? ________________
How did you hear about the National Bulletin on Liturgy? ________________
This rite includes not simply the celebration of the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and eucharist, but also all the rites belonging to the catechumenate. The rite is first presented in Part I of this book in its complete and usual form. This is designed for the preparation of a group of candidates, but by simple adaptation pastors can easily devise a form suited to one person.

Part II provides rites for special circumstances: the Christian initiation of children, a simple form of the rite for adults to be carried out in exceptional circumstances, and a short form of the rite for those in danger of death. Part II also includes guidelines for preparing uncatechized adults for confirmation and eucharist, the rite of reception of baptized Christians into the full communion of the Catholic Church, and a rite combining this reception with celebration of Christian initiation at the Easter Vigil.

This Canadian edition also includes a 40-page section of Other Rites for Use in Canada. These provide a full set of celebrations for baptized Catholics preparing for confirmation and Eucharist, and for Christians coming into the full communion of the Catholic Church. Parallel to the rites of the catechumenate for the unbaptized, these celebrations respect the baptismal dignity of the candidates and meet the pastoral needs of Canadian communities. Pastors, catechists, and others involved in leading the catechumenate will benefit from this book in preparing and celebrating liturgies.