Popular Piety and the Liturgy: The Vatican Directory
This bulletin is primarily pastoral in scope. It is prepared for members of parish liturgy committees, readers, musicians, singers, catechists, teachers, religious, seminarians, clergy, diocesan liturgical commissions, and for all who are involved in preparing, celebrating, and improving the community’s life of worship and prayer.

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

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Popular Piety and the Liturgy: The Vatican Directory
This is the last issue

This is the last hardcopy issue of the National Bulletin on Liturgy. During the Plenary Meeting in Cornwall, October 19-23, 2004, the English Sector members of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops decided to move toward publishing the content of the National Bulletin on Liturgy in an electronic version in order to deal with the escalating costs of traditional publishing and also to meet the objective of a balanced budget in 2005. Therefore, all future liturgical formation and information will be available on the CCCB website (<http://www.cccb.ca>).

This innovative move will take some time in order to be implemented, but readers can be assured that the Episcopal Commission for Liturgy and the National Liturgy Office are aiming to launch this project by early 2005.

We take this step with deep thankfulness and appreciation toward you, our faithful readers, for your continuous support along the past 40 years.

We also want to thank Zita Maier, a former editor of the NBL, for editing this issue with the same care as in the past.

Acknowledgements

Excerpts from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy: Principles and Guidelines (Vatican City 2001) as found on the Vatican website: www.vatican.va

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This edition of the NBL focuses on a document which has not received much attention in Canada, the *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy: Principles and Guidelines*, issued in December 2001 by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Disciple of the Sacraments.

But first we have in this edition the statement of the Canadian bishops, “Observations on Redemptionis Sacramentum,” which they prepared as a follow-up to the April 23 publication by the CDWDS of the “Instruction, Redemptionis Sacramentum, On Certain Matters to be Observed or to be Avoided regarding the Most Holy Eucharist.” Their statement notes that the nature of the document is “administrative rather than legislative,” that it must be read in conjunction with other documents on the Eucharist, and that “the Instruction is intended to serve as a reminder of pre-existing norms and to clarify their implications.” Since the Canadian bishops have not yet implemented the 2000 General Instruction for the Roman Missal with adaptations for the Canadian Church, those directives that reflect the GIRM are also on hold.

Perhaps the most important point to keep in mind is, as John M. Huels concludes in “Canonical Observations on Redemptionis Sacramentum” [Worship, vol. 78, no. 5 (The Liturgical Press, September 2004) pp. 404-420], the observance of liturgical law, a means of celebrating liturgy more effectively, is not an end in itself but has as its purpose “to form the community of Christ’s disciples who transform the world by the love they have for one another, and in this community of disciples the greatest virtue is charity ...” (p. 420).

As for the *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy*, the document emphasizes a point made in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy that the liturgy is the summit and the source of the life of the Church and the devotional life of the Church is to be in harmony with the liturgy. It also dispels the notion that the reform of the liturgy dismissed popular devotions, that the Church was asking people to give up authentic popular devotional practices. The document clearly encourages the practice of popular piety, provided they supplement the official liturgy of the Church rather than replace it.

The document offers not only guidelines on a wide variety of devotional practices but insights into the liturgy itself that could be helpful to liturgy committees. The full document can be found on the Internet by asking Google to search for “Vatican directory.”

One area of devotional life for many Catholics is adoration of the Blessed Sacrament; this practice is the subject of an article by an author featured previously in NBL, Joyce Ann Zimmerman. This article offers some appropriate reflection in light of the theme announced for the 2005 Synod of Bishops: The Eucharist: Source and Summit of the Life and Mission of the Church.

Other features included in this edition are the music suggestions for Lent and Easter of Year A, finding your place in the lectionary, some brief book reviews, and a column entitled “Et Cetera.”

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Observations on
Redemptionis Sacramentum

With the publication of the Instruction, Redemptionis Sacramentum, On Certain Matters to be Observed or to be Avoided regarding the Most Holy Eucharist, pastors may be looking for assistance in responding to various questions.

The following are notes to help in the reflections of pastors and faithful. These have been prepared by the French Sector National Liturgy Office of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, in consultation with the English Sector National Liturgy Office.

When applying the Instruction Redemptionis Sacramentum, it will be pertinent to recall the following:

1. The Instruction is to be read in continuity with the 17 April 2003 Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II, Ecclesia de Eucharistia.

2. The Instruction is accompanied by a presentation from the Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, His Eminence Francis Cardinal Arinze.

3. The implementation of the Instruction is entrusted to the bishop of the diocese who is the moderator, promoter, and custodian of the whole liturgical life of his diocese (cf. can. 835).

4. As recalled by the Second Vatican Council in its Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium, no. 26, "Liturgical services are not private functions, but are celebrations of the Church, which is the 'sacrament of unity,' namely, a holy people united and organized under their bishops. Therefore, liturgical services pertain to the whole body of the Church...."

NOTES

These notes have been prepared by the French Sector National Liturgy Office of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, in consultation with the English Sector National Liturgy Office, on the Instruction Redemptionis Sacramentum, approved on 25 March 2004 and issued 23 April 2004 by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments.

1. Nature of the document

This is an instruction from a Roman Congregation, approved in ordinary form by the Supreme Pontiff. It resembles an act of administrative rather than legislative law. The subtitle clearly indicates its disciplinary nature: "On certain matters to be observed or to be avoided regarding the Most Holy Eucharist."

The Instruction does not seek to provide a catechesis or a theology of the Eucharist. The vocabulary used is distinctly disciplinary; for example, the term "norm(s)" appears 67 times whereas the term "formation" appears only three times. The first chapter, "The Regulation of the Sacred Liturgy," presents a summary of the major principles of liturgical law. The eighth and final chapter, "Remedies," deals with applicable procedures and sanctions in cases of liturgical abuses. The reader is directed to other documents (Sacrosanctum Concilium, Dies Domini and Ecclesia de Eucharistia) for a reflection on theological or catechetical aspects.
Observations on *Redemptionis Sacramentum*

2. Objective

The objective is clearly indicated in paragraph 2: the Instruction treats “of certain matters pertaining to the discipline of the Sacrament of the Eucharist” but is not “a compendium of norms” regarding the sacrament. At the same time, it also establishes further norms “by which those earlier ones are explained and complemented.” In this regard, the Instruction is intended to serve as a reminder of pre-existing norms and to clarify their implications.

It is evident that the Congregation seeks to counter and to correct a certain number of abuses, as well as to encourage full respect for liturgical norms. “All should conform to the ordinances set forth by legitimate ecclesiastical authority” (n. 7). Different types of abuses are dealt with more explicitly near the end of the document. The first of these to be presented are the most serious offences that violate the sanctity of the sacrament of the Eucharist and are to be referred to the Congregation, which is the only authority competent to deal with the *graviora delicta* (n. 172). As for other types of abuses, there are certain serious matters that risk the validity and dignity of the sacrament (n. 173). Other abuses are characterized by the violation of norms found in liturgical books; these abuses are also to be avoided and corrected (n. 174-175). Numerous abusive practices are listed in each chapter, and the questions dealt with are evident by surveying the table of contents.

3. Intended audience

In principle, the Instruction is aimed at the entire Latin Church and, within it, all categories of the faithful. *Redemptionis Sacramentum* makes specific mention of the important roles of the diocesan Bishop, “the first steward of the mysteries of God in the particular Church entrusted to him” (n. 19); of priests, the “capable, prudent and indispensable co-workers of the order of Bishops, called to the service of the People of God” (n. 29); and of lay ministers, who “for the good of the community and of the whole Church of God … have rightly and laudably exercised ministries in the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy” (n. 43).

The Instruction also makes particular note of the following:

**Bishops:** are reminded that by virtue of their mission as moderators, promoters and guardians of the whole liturgical life of their diocese (n. 19), they must investigate an abuse of the sacrament of the Eucharist whenever they receive plausible notice (n. 178);

**Priests:** as “capable, prudent and indispensable co-workers of the order of Bishops” (n. 29), are to cultivate “their liturgical knowledge and ability” (n. 33);

**Deacons:** are also to do their part to celebrate the liturgy according to the norms of the duly approved liturgical books (n. 35);

**Lay faithful:** are reminded of their right “to a liturgical celebration that is an expression of the Church’s life in accordance with her tradition and discipline” (n. 11);

**All the faithful:** have a right to bring a complaint regarding liturgical abuse to the attention of the local Bishop or Apostolic See (n. 184), but at the same time the document suggests starting with the diocesan Bishop.

4. Helpful principles

The Instruction deals with diverse questions of varying importance. Occasionally, the text recalls legislative or liturgical principles that will be useful in evaluating particular situations. Some of these principles are the following:
The Bishop is to assure liberty for adapting celebrations in an intelligent manner to a particular church building, or for the faithful present, or in accordance with particular pastoral circumstances (n. 21);

Priests are to cultivate their liturgical knowledge and ability (n. 33);

Active participation in the liturgy is to be promoted and explained, with ample flexibility for adaptations and appropriate creativity in accordance with the needs of the participants (n. 39);

There should customarily be true and suitable sacred music; altar, vestments and sacred linens are to be dignified, proper, and clean (n. 57);

The celebration of the Eucharist is to be carefully prepared in all its parts (n. 58);

The homily is to be based upon the mysteries of salvation, expounding the mysteries of the faith and the norms of Christian life from the biblical readings and liturgical texts (n. 67);

External gifts added to the offerings of bread and wine must always be a visible expression of that true gift which God expects (a contrite heart, the love of God and neighbour) and should be brought forward in an appropriate manner (n. 70);

The sign of peace is appropriate before Holy Communion (nn. 71-72);

The penitential act, at the beginning of Mass, has the purpose of preparing all to be ready to celebrate the sacred mysteries, and cannot be regarded as a substitute for the Sacrament of Penance (n. 80);

The First Communion of children must always be preceded by sacramental confession and absolution (n. 87);
Observations on *Redemptionis Sacramentum*

- The celebrant priest is not to resume the Mass until the Communion of the faithful is concluded (n. 88);
- It is preferable that the faithful, as also the priests (n. 98), receive Communion with hosts consecrated at the same Mass (n. 89);
- The fullness of the sign of the Eucharistic banquet is more clearly evident when Communion is under both kinds (n. 100);
- Masses are not to be multiplied contrary to the norm of law (n. 116);
- The sacred vessels may be purified at the credence table (n. 119);
- Pastors are to take care that the linens for the sacred table, especially those which will receive the sacred species, are always kept clean (n. 120);
- The sacred vestments should contribute to the beauty of the sacred action itself (n. 121);
- The Eucharist is to be reserved in a tabernacle in a part of the church which is noble, prominent, readily visible, and adorned in a dignified manner and furthermore suitable for prayer (n. 130);
- Unless there is a grave reason to the contrary, a church in which the Eucharist is reserved should be open to the faithful for at least some hours each day (n. 135);
- The Eucharist, when exposed, is not to be left unattended, even for the briefest space of time (n. 138);
- The priests present at the celebration are not to abstain from distributing Communion by handing this function to laypersons (n. 157);
- In the case of particular celebrations in the absence of a priest, the diocesan Bishop must prudently discern whether Holy Communion ought to be distributed, and it is preferable that such gatherings be directed by several lay faithful rather than by only one member of the laity (n. 165);
- In the case of weekday celebrations in the absence of a priest, there should be concern about distributing Holy Communion outside of Sunday Mass (n. 166);
- The remedy for abuses is the biblical and liturgical formation of all the People of God (n. 170).

5. Abuses indicated

All the abuses indicated in the Instruction are not equally serious, and so it is also important to evaluate their gravity. In addition to those most serious cases which involve sacrilege, the simulation of the Mass, or concelebration with ministers of Ecclesial Communities that do not have Apostolic Succession, other abuses include:

- The use of Eucharistic Bread that is not unleavened or made purely of wheat (n. 48);
- The use of wine other than that which is natural and from the fruit of the grape, pure and incorrupt (n. 50);
- The use or composition of unauthorized Eucharistic Prayers (n. 51);
- Allowing parts of the Eucharistic Prayer to be recited by a deacon, a lay minister, or an individual member of the faithful, or by all members of the faithful together (n. 52);
- The use of other music during the Eucharistic Prayer, apart from the duly approved acclamations (n. 53);
Observations on *Redemptionis Sacramentum*

- The breaking of the host at the time of the consecration (n. 55);
- The omission of the name of the Supreme Pontiff or of the diocesan Bishop in the Eucharistic Prayer (n. 56);
- Altering or varying the texts of the liturgy (n. 59);
- Separating the Liturgy of the Word from the Liturgy of the Eucharist by celebrating them at different times or places (n. 60);
- Omitting or substituting the prescribed biblical readings, including the responsorial psalm, or substituting with non-biblical texts (n. 62);
- The proclaiming of the Gospel by a layperson, even a religious (n. 63);
- Entrusting the homily to a layperson (nn. 64-65), seminarians, theological students, or "pastoral assistants" (n. 66);
- The introduction of Creeds or Professions of Faith not in the duly approved liturgical books (n. 69);
- Giving an instruction or testimony at Mass on the Christian life by a layperson before the Prayer after Communion, or confusing this instruction or testimony with the homily, or dispensing the homily on account of the instruction or testimony given by a layperson (n. 74);
- The insertion of the celebration of Mass into the setting of a common meal (n. 77);
- Introducing into the Eucharistic celebration elements that are contrary to the prescriptions of the liturgical books or taken from the rites of other religions (n. 79);
- The faithful taking by themselves the sacred host or the sacred chalice, or handing these from one to another, and the administration of Communion by one spouse to another at the Nuptial Mass (n. 94);
- The distribution of unconsecrated hosts or other edible or inedible things after the manner of Communion (n. 96);
- The priest celebrant or a concelebrant waiting until after the Communion of the faithful before taking Communion himself (n. 97);
- The pouring of the Blood of Christ after the consecration from one vessel to another, which is completely to be avoided (n. 106);
- Celebrating the Mass in a temple or other sacred place of any non-Christian religion (n. 109);
- The suspension of Mass in an arbitrary manner on the pretext of promoting a "fast from the Eucharist" (n. 115);
- The celebration of the Eucharist with common vessels, or others lacking in quality, or devoid of all artistic merit or which are mere containers (n. 117);
- The celebration of Mass by a priest without sacred vestments, even when only one minister is participating (n. 126);
- The participation of priests at Mass in the manner of the lay faithful, except in rare and exceptional cases and with reasonable cause (n. 128).

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops
June 8, 2004

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The promulgation of Sacrosanctum Concilium (SC), the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (December 4, 1963), marked the official beginning of the most recent liturgical reform throughout the universal church. Energized by the vision of the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council, bishops, pastors and newly formed liturgical commissions began the process of fostering full, conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations—the kind of participation which is the right and duty of every member of the Church—by virtue of his or her baptism (SC 14). Through countless conferences, workshops, journals and newsletters, homilies and catechetical programs, efforts were made to impress upon the people of God the primacy of the Sunday Eucharist and the sacraments as the means of fostering the true Christian spirit. The faithful were fittingly instructed that the liturgy—the public, communal and corporate prayer of the Church—is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed, and at the same time, the font from which all her power flows (SC 10). They were urged to recognize that every liturgical celebration is both the action of Christ the priest, and of his Body the Church, and therefore, a sacred action surpassing all others.

In response to the conciliar call for liturgical reform, much pastoral activity was immediately directed toward liturgical education, the formation of liturgical ministers, the promotion of Bible study and changes in church buildings for the purpose of enabling communities to participate more fully in liturgical celebrations. As a consequence of the renewed emphasis on the central place of liturgical prayer in the Christian life and the huge amount of energy expended in promoting liturgical participation, many practices regarded as popular piety and devotion seemed to disappear. Indeed, there were some in the post-conciliar Church who saw no need for such piety and devotion in view of the primacy and efficacy of liturgical prayer. Such a viewpoint, however, is inconsistent with the thinking of the Council Fathers and with SC.

SC specifically notes that the liturgy does not stand alone as the sole form of prayer in the Christian life, nor as the only means (even if it is the principal means) of fostering a healthy spiritual life. Paragraphs 12 and 13 deserve to be restated in their entirety:

12. The spiritual life, however, is not limited solely to participation in the liturgy. The Christian is indeed called to pray with his brethren, but he must also enter into his chamber to pray to the Father, in secret; yet more, according to the teaching of the Apostle, he should pray without ceasing. We
learn from the same Apostle that we must always bear about in our body the dying of Jesus, so that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodily frame. This is why we ask the Lord in the sacrifice of the Mass that, “receiving the offering of the spiritual victim,” he may fashion us for himself “as an eternal gift.”

13. Popular devotions of the Christian people are to be highly commended, provided they accord with the laws and norms of the Church, above all when they are ordered by the Apostolic See.

Devotions proper to individual Churches also have a special dignity if they are undertaken by mandate of the bishops according to customs or books lawfully approved.

But these devotions should be so drawn up that they harmonize with the liturgical seasons, accord with the sacred liturgy, are in some fashion derived from it, and lead the people to it, since, in fact, the liturgy by its very nature far surpasses any of them.

During the past forty years, bishops, pastors and liturgists have sought to unpack the connection between the liturgy and popular devotions and find a proper balance between the two forms of prayer. This has sometimes been a difficult task. On the one hand, maintaining the primacy of liturgical prayer has occasionally resulted in the abandonment of popular devotions. On the other hand, the promotion of popular devotions has sometimes resulted in compromising sound liturgical principles.

In December 2001, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments promulgated a Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy as a means both to affirm the primacy of the liturgy and to cultivate a positive and encouraging stance toward popular piety. The Directory seeks to provide bishops and those who collaborate with them, and superiors of institutes of consecrated life, with basic principles and guidelines to maintain the unique relationship that ought to exist between the liturgy and popular religiosity or popular piety.

The lengthy document (231 pages, including biblical and topical indices) is divided into two parts. Following a substantial introduction, the Directory presents an historical overview of the relationship between liturgy and popular piety in history and in the magisterium of the Church, and offers principles for evaluating the renewal of popular forms of piety. In the second part of the Directory, guidelines are offered for harmonizing popular piety and the liturgy. In this section, particular forms of piety related to the liturgical year, the veneration of the Mother of God and the saints, prayer for the dead, and practices related to shrines and pilgrimages are discussed.

This article will provide the reader of the Directory with an introduction to, and summary of, the key insights offered which will be of assistance to pastoral ministers in bringing about a balanced relationship between various forms of popular piety and the Church’s liturgy.

Introduction

The purpose of this Directory is two-fold: to promote the liturgy and “to ensure that other forms of piety among the Christian people are not overlooked, nor their useful contribution to living in unity with Christ, in the Church, be forgotten” (1). Underlying the text is the firm conviction that authentic expressions of popular piety and the liturgy are not at odds.

The introduction is divided into five parts, beginning with an overview of some current attitudes toward popular
Revisiting Popular Piety and Devotions

piety and devotions, followed by a glossary of terms used in the document, and by three principles offered for understanding genuine forms of popular piety. Next, the "language" or elements of popular devotions are discussed, and finally, the responsibilities and competencies of the local ordinary and the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments are identified.

Attitudes toward popular piety

In an overview that is helpful, the authors of the Directory identify some of the attitudes towards popular piety which emerged in the post-conciliar period:

- manifest and hasty abandonment of inherited forms of popular piety resulting in a void not easily filled;
- attachment to imperfect or erroneous types of devotion which are estranged from biblical revelation and compete with the economy of the sacraments;
- unjustified criticism of the piety of the common people in the name of a presumed "purity" of faith;
- a need to preserve the riches of popular piety, which is an expression of the profound and mature religious feeling of the people at a given moment in space and time;
- a need to purify popular piety of equivocation and of the dangers deriving from syncretism;
- the renewed vitality of popular religiosity in resisting, or in reaction to, a pragmatic technological culture and economic utilitarianism;
- decline of interest in popular piety ensuing on the rise of secularized ideologies and the aggressive activities of "sects" hostile to it (1).

The contradictory nature of these attitudes underscores the many challenges that bishops, pastors and liturgical committees face when seeking to affirm and promote genuine forms of piety.

A glossary of terms

The language used with regard to popular devotions and piety is often confusing. The Directory offers some helpful distinctions (6-10), identifying the nature of various forms of devotion and piety, thus assisting pastoral ministers in determining which of these will most effectively lead people to the liturgy or sustain them in faith following the liturgical celebration.

Pious exercise refers to those public or private expressions of Christian piety which, although not part of the liturgy, are considered to be in harmony with the spirit, norms and rhythms of the liturgy. Such exercises are inspired in some way by the liturgy and lead people to it. They always refer to public revelation and to an ecclesial background. Frequently they are carried out according to approved customs or books.

Devotions refers to "various external practices (e.g., prayers, hymns, observances attached to particular time or places, insignia, medals, habits or customs)" (8). These practices manifest a particular relationship with the Divine Persons or the Blessed Virgin Mary or the saints.

Popular piety designates those diverse cultic expressions—private or communal— which are not inspired by the liturgy but derive from a particular nation or people or from their culture (9). They often manifest a thirst for God and motivate people to embrace Christian attitudes.

Popular religiosity refers to a universal experience—the religious dimension of people's lives, a sense of transcendence (10). Popular religiosity does not necessarily refer to Christian revelation.

Some principles

The Directory identifies three principles which ought to guide the development and renewal of forms of piety and devotion in keeping with the spirit of the liturgy. Though these are developed in greater detail later in the text, it is worthwhile to consider them here.

The primacy of the liturgy as the action of Christ and the Church, surpassing all others, is to be fostered. At certain moments in the past, the liturgy was regarded as not
popular in the sense that participation was limited to a select few. The Directory affirms every effort to promote full, conscious and active participation, so that other forms of prayer are not regarded as an alternative to, or substitutive for, the liturgical action itself. It is noted that while sacramental actions are necessary to life in Christ, the various forms of popular piety are properly optional. Furthermore, the preeminence of liturgical celebration is not to be interpreted in exclusive terms, nor in terms of opposition or marginalization. Rather, it is suggested, liturgy is to be viewed in a complementary way to devotions and popular piety (11).

The Gospel is the criterion against which all expressions of Christian piety, both old and new, are to be measured. Christian piety, like the liturgy itself, may never incorporate rites permeated by magic, superstition, animism, vendettas or sexual connotations. Genuine pious exercises and devotional practices should be permeated by a biblical spirit, a liturgical spirit, an anthropological spirit, and to be successful, ought to be imbued with a pedagogical awareness (12).

A distinction from and harmony with the liturgy is to be maintained (13). Concretely, this means that formulae proper to pious exercises should not be “commined” with liturgical actions. Acts of devotion and piety are external to the celebration of the Eucharist, and of the other sacraments. Therefore, “superimposing” pious and devotional practices on the liturgy, with their distinct language, rhythm, course and theological emphasis, which is different than the corresponding liturgical action, is to be avoided. Conversely, attempts to impose forms of liturgical celebration on pious practices is also to be avoided.

Responsibilities and competencies

The final section of the introductory notes in the Directory (21) point out that it is the responsibility of the local Ordinary to regulate manifestations of popular piety, to encourage them as a means of assisting the faithful in living the Christian life, and to purify and evangelize them where necessary. It is likewise his responsibility to ensure that they do not substitute for the liturgy or become part of liturgical celebrations. Finally, it is the responsibility of the local Ordinary to approve all prayers and formulae associated with public acts of piety and devotional practices. It is the competence of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments to assist the bishops in the fulfillment of his responsibilities.
Liturgy and Popular Piety: An Historical Perspective

The first chapter of the Directory offers an historical review of the relationship between liturgy and popular piety. Though this review is admittedly brief, it serves as a particularly valuable tool for understanding many contemporary attitudes toward liturgy and popular piety and devotions.

Christian antiquity (22-27)

The earliest Christian communities focused their attention on Christ alone. The person of Christ, his life-giving word, his commandment of mutual love and the celebration of the Eucharist in his memory were central to the life of the Christian community in this period. There were signs of personal piety among the first generation of Christians, who sought to pray incessantly, often using the biblical language which was part of the liturgy. The development of the cult of the martyrs and the earliest veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary were likewise linked with the liturgical celebration of the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord.

With the Edict of Constantine and the changed political-social situation of the Church in the fourth century, a process of inculturation took place. Cultic elements from the pagan world were adapted as necessary and absorbed into the liturgy, placing them at the service of the Church's worship of Christ, the true God and Saviour. In the fourth and fifth centuries, with the discovery of places associated with the mysteries of Christ's life, death and resurrection, a greater sense of the sacredness of places and times began to emerge. Forms of piety and devotion associated with these places were incorporated into the liturgy, thus giving shape to the liturgical year. During this same period, the formation of various liturgical families, with their respective cultures, languages, theological traditions, spiritual sensibilities and social contexts began to mature. Forms of popular piety and devotion did not remain extraneous to the liturgy but were incorporated into the public worship of the Christian community and anchored firmly in the celebration of the paschal mystery.

The Middle Ages (28-33)

Between the seventh and fifteenth centuries, a sort of dualism developed between liturgy and popular piety. Parallel to the liturgy, celebrated in Latin, a communitarian popular piety celebrated in the vernacular emerged. Worth noting are some of the reasons for this development cited by the Directory (30):

- the idea that the liturgy was the competence of the clerics, since the laity were no more than spectators at the liturgy;
- the marked distinction of roles in Christian society—clerics, monks, and laity—giving rise to different styles and forms of prayer;
- in liturgy and iconography, the distinct and particular consideration given to the various aspects of the one mystery of Christ, while expressing a devotion to the life and work of our Lord, failing to facilitate an explicit realization of the centrality of the Paschal mystery and encouraged a multiplicity of particular times and forms of celebration of a distinctively popular tenor;
- lack of a sufficient knowledge of the Scriptures on the part, not only of the laity, but many clerics and religious, making access to an understanding of the structure and symbolic language of the liturgy difficult;
- the diffusion of apocryphal literature containing many stories of miracles and episodic anecdotes, on the other hand, having a significant influence on iconography which, touching the imagination of the faithful, naturally attracted their attention;
- the practical absence of any form of homiletic preaching, the disappearance of mystagogical preaching, and poor catechetical formation rendering the celebration of the liturgy closed to the understanding and active participation
of the faithful, who turned to alternative cultic times and forms;
• a tendency to allegory, excessively encroaching on the meaning of the liturgical texts and rites, often deviating the faithful from an understanding of the true nature of the liturgy;
• the discovery of expressive, popular forms and structures unconsciously redrafting the liturgy, which from many perspectives had become increasingly incomprehensible and distant from the people.

As a result of these factors, a series of new forms of popular piety gradually developed:
• sacred performances depicting the mysteries celebrated during the liturgical year, especially those surrounding the events of the Lord's passion, death and resurrection;
• the participation of the faithful being encouraged by the emergence of poetry in the vernacular which was widely used in popular piety;
• as a parallel or substitute for liturgical forms of prayer, several devotional forms appearing, such as Eucharistic adoration to compensate for the rarity with which Communion was received, the rosary substituted for the psalter, and pious exercises on Good Friday becoming a substitute for the solemn liturgical celebration of the Passion;
• the growth of popular forms of devotion to Mary and the saints, pilgrimages to the Holy Land and to the tombs of the apostles, martyrs, veneration of relics, litanies and prayers for the dead;
• the development and popularity of rites of blessing;
• nucleuses of "sacred times" based on popular practices being constituted, which were often marginal to the liturgical year, e.g. tridua, octaves, novenas, months devoted to particular devotions.

In the Middle Ages, the relationship between popular piety and the liturgy was complex, but a dual movement can be detected: the liturgy inspired and nourished various expressions of popular piety and several forms of popular piety were assumed by, and integrated into, the liturgy. Nevertheless, there was often a lack of balance between the two forms of prayer, with popular devotion overshadowing the centrality of liturgical prayer.

The modern period (34-43)
The Directory identifies the modern period as the time between the fifteenth century and nineteenth century. During this period, the distance between popular forms of piety and liturgical prayer seems to have widened considerably. The introduction of the devotio moderna of the late fifteenth century was popular with many great spiritual masters and was widespread among clergy and cultivated laity. The promotion of meditation on the humanity of Christ—the mystery of his infancy, hidden life, passion and death—was central to this form of devotion. The primacy accorded to contemplation, the importance attributed to subjectivity and a certain ascetical pragmatism exalting human endeavour ensured that the liturgy no longer appeared as the primary source of the Christian life.

From the fifteenth to the beginning of the sixteenth century, the relationship between liturgy and popular piety was placed in a different context: the evangelization and catechesis of countries at a distance from the cultic center of the Roman rite. While preaching the word and celebrating the sacraments was part of this evangelization effort, pious exercises also became the means of transmitting the Gospel message, and following conversion, of preserving the Christian faith.

The Council of Trent initiated a reform of the liturgy which included the elimination of elements and impositions extraneous to the liturgy. As a result of the reform, the liturgy entered a static period of substantial uniformity. At the same time, there was an extraordinary development of popular piety, a development marked by the creation and diffusion of
pious exercises designed to defend the faith and nourish the piety of the faithful. The establishment of confraternities devoted to the mysteries of the Lord's Passion as well as those devoted to Mary and the saints, preaching parish missions to encourage the faithful to celebrate the sacrament of Penance and receive Communion, and the collection and organization of many pious exercises in prayer manuals belong to this period of Catholic reform. Although there was a contrast between the stability of the liturgy and the development of popular piety, anomalies also existed. Some pious exercises took place during the liturgy and were perceived as more important than the liturgical actions. These situations accentuated a detachment from Sacred Scripture and lacked a sufficient emphasis on the paschal mystery and its privileged expression on Sunday.

The age of enlightenment brought with it a further development in the relationship between liturgy and popular piety. The “learned” members of the church gravitated to the liturgy while the “simple” folk gravitated to forms of popular piety, even though both shared the same religious practices.

**Contemporary period (44-58)**

The nineteenth century witnessed an important liturgical revival accompanied by a development in ecclesiology, which saw the Church not only as a hierarchical society but also as the people of God and a worshiping community. The liturgical renewal also coincided with the flowering of biblical and patristic studies and emerging ecclesial and ecumenical concerns.

Independent of the liturgical revival of this period was a significant growth in popular piety which included the development of popular hymns, the widespread use of liturgical aids and bilingual missals, and a proliferation of devotional books. Also, expressions of local cults arose in connection with miracles and apparitions, hence the establishment of Marian sanctuaries and centres of pilgrimage.

Although the liturgical revival and growth in popular piety during the nineteenth century were independent of one another, they were somewhat fused in pastoral practice.

At the outset of the twentieth century, Pope Pius X sought to bring the liturgy closer to the people and at the same time to affirm the superiority of the liturgy over forms of popular devotion as the source of the true Christian spirit. The twentieth century liturgical movement took off from this point, and efforts were made to restore the purity of divine worship based on the liturgy of the early centuries. This meant the radical rejection of any form of popular piety deriving from the Middle Ages or post-Tridentine period. This rejection, however, failed to take into account the fact that many of these forms of popular piety had sustained the spiritual lives of countless people and produced abundant spiritual fruit. Hence, there was still a lack of clarity regarding the proper relationship between the liturgy and popular piety.

It was the work of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council to finally define the relationship between the liturgy and popular piety by declaring the unquestionable primacy of the sacred liturgy and the subordination to it of pious exercises, while maintaining their validity.

**The current problem (47-58)**

The challenge for the Church today, as it was in previous ages, is to find a balance in the relationship between the liturgy and forms of popular piety. This section of the Directory identifies some of the causes for the current problem, unhelpful attitudes which arise from a lack of respect for popular piety and questions which require further reflection. Pastoral leaders will need to wrestle with the issues and questions summarized below in order to realize in pastoral practice the relationship between liturgy and popular piety as articulated in SC 12-13.
Causes for the current problem:

- a weakened awareness of the paschal mystery and its centrality for the history of salvation;
- a weakened sense of the universal priesthood of the baptized;
- insufficient knowledge of the language proper to the liturgy (as well as its signs, symbols and symbolic gestures).

Attitudes arising from a lack of respect for popular piety:

- the refusal to accept popular piety as an ecclesial reality prompted and guided by the Holy Spirit;
- a failure to take into account the fruits of grace and sanctity which popular piety has produced;
- a quest for pure liturgy, without considering the "subjective" criteria used to determine purity;
- confusing "sense" with "sentimentality."

Questions for further reflection:

- What is the relationship between spontaneity and the formality of ritual?
- In both liturgy and popular piety, how can one engage the total being: all the senses?
- What is the relationship between the language of popular prayer, which is the language of a particular people, and the language of the liturgy which places on the lips of participants words which are not their own or alien to their level of culture?
- What is the connection between the cultural expectations and ritual language of popular piety and the ritual proper to the liturgy which often derives from different cultural sources widely removed from those of the faithful?

Values in popular piety

The values recognized in popular piety (61-64) can be summarized as follows:

- popular piety is a living reality in and of the Church;
- its source is the constant presence of the Spirit of God in the ecclesial community;
- the mystery of Christ Our Saviour is its reference point;
- the glory of God and the salvation of humanity is its object;
- its historical moment is the encounter of evangelization and culture;
- it has an innate sense of the sacred and the transcendent, and manifests a genuine thirst for God;
- popular piety prompts and nourishes certain dispositions and virtues such as patience, trust in God, the capacity to bear one's sufferings, a desire to please God, penance, detachment from material things, solidarity and openness to others, a sense of friendliness, charity and family unity;
- popular piety often directs people to the mystery of Christ's passion and death and can lead them to contemplate the afterlife;
- popular piety has the potential to fuse the gospel message with a particular culture;
- it contributes to the sustaining of faith and has the potential to inspire new forms of evangelization.

Deviations in popular piety

The magisterium recognizes many values attached to popular piety. However, the Directory points out some problems that may arise in certain forms of popular piety which are considered danger signs leading to an unbalanced relationship between liturgy and popular piety (65). These are summarized as follows:

- a lack of awareness of the salvific significance of the resurrection of Christ;
- a lack of awareness of belonging to the Church;
- a lack of attention to the person and action of the Holy Spirit;

Liturgy and Popular Piety in the Church's Magisterium

The second chapter of the Directory proposes a synthesis of the magisterial teaching on popular piety.
Revisiting Popular Piety and Devotions

- a disproportionate interest between the saints and the absolute sovereignty of Jesus Christ and his mysteries;
- a lack of contact with the Scriptures;
- isolation from the Church's sacramental life;
- the emergence of a dichotomy between worship and the duties of the Christian life;
- a utilitarian view of some forms of popular piety;
- the use of signs, gestures and formulae which sometimes become excessively important or even theatrical;
- in certain instances, the risk of promoting sects, superstition, magic, fatalism or oppression.

The subject of popular piety

The Directory acknowledges the magisterium's conviction that "the spiritual life ... is not limited solely to participation in the liturgy" and that "the Christian ... must enter into his bedroom to pray to his Father in secret" (67). Furthermore, the Directory notes that every Christian is the subject of popular piety, both privately when moved by the Spirit of Christ, and when praying with the community in groups of different origins and types.

Pious exercises

Pious exercises, as described earlier, are part of Christian worship. Indeed, some of them have received the approbation of the magisterium. They are to be encouraged, provided they conform to the doctrine, legal discipline and norms of the Church, are in harmony with the sacred liturgy, take into account the seasons of the liturgical calendar, and in so far as possible, encourage conscious active participation in the prayer of the Church.

Liturgy and pious exercises

In addition to what has already been said in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (12-13) about this relationship, the Directory advises against any mixture or admixture of these two forms of prayer.

An Evaluation of Renewal of Popular Piety

In the introduction of the Directory, three overarching principles for evaluating forms of popular piety were identified: the primacy of the liturgy, the criterion of the Gospel, and the maintenance of a distinction from and harmony with the liturgy (see 11-13). In the third chapter a more comprehensive list of criteria is provided for evaluating and encouraging the renewal of popular piety.

The life of worship: communion with the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit (76-80)

If liturgical prayer and popular devotions are to exist in a proper relationship in Christian life, both must express the Trinitarian character of Christian prayer. Prayer addressed to the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit will be most important in fostering such a harmony. To this end, the Directory calls for greater instruction on the Trinitarian character of Christian prayer, greater emphasis on the person and action of the Holy Spirit and on the primacy of the resurrection (especially in the context of devotion to the passion of the Lord). It goes without saying, of course, that all forms of popular devotion must lead to full, conscious and active participation in the celebration of the Eucharist.

The Church: worshipping community (81-84)

All authentic forms of popular piety are also fruits of the Holy Spirit and must be always be regarded as expressions of ecclesial piety. Therefore, the Directory calls for a renewed awareness of ecclesiology as one of the first steps in renewing popular piety in its proper relation to the liturgy.

Forms of popular piety must always be in contact with the revealed word, the tradition and the sacred liturgy itself. In this way, there will develop a correct understanding of the relationship between
the particular and universal Church, the relationship between the heavenly Church and the pilgrim Church on earth, and the relationship between ministry and charism.

Common priesthood and popular piety (85-86)

Through the sacraments of Christian initiation, the faithful become part of a prophetic, priestly and royal people, called to worship God in spirit and in truth. The baptized exercise their common priesthood by uniting themselves with Christ, making of themselves a living and holy sacrifice of praise, and offering prayers of intercession. The Directory suggests that a genuine renewal of popular piety will take place when participants in this form of prayer understand their action as an exercise of their baptismal priesthood.

Word of God and popular piety (87-89)

The Directory calls attention to the Word of God as the privileged and indispensable instrument of the Holy Spirit in the Church's worship. For this reason, it advocates a close connection between the Scriptures and forms of popular piety. It is highly recommended that the various forms of popular piety normally include biblical texts, opportunely chosen and duly provided with a commentary. Practically speaking, these texts will most often be short, easily memorized, incisive and easily understood. In this way the passages may be learned by heart, easily remembered, and therefore, nourish the true Christian spirit.

Popular piety and private revelation (90)

The Directory notes that popular piety has always been interested in extraordinary happenings and events that are not infrequently connected with private revelation. For this reason, it points out the nature of private revelations and their relation to the definitive revelation of God in Jesus Christ. The passage quoted from the Catechism of the Catholic Church is worth emphasizing:

Throughout the ages, there have been so-called private revelations, some of which have been recognized by the authority of the Church. They do not belong, however, to the deposit of faith. It is not their role to improve or complete Christ's definitive Revelation, but to help live more fully by it in a certain period of history. Guided by the Magisterium of the Church, the sensus fidelium knows how to discern and welcome in these revelations whatever constitutes an authentic call of Christ or his saints to the Church" (67).

A genuine renewal of popular piety will need to evaluate private revelations in relationship to the definitive revelation of Jesus Christ and the way the Church is called to live the mystery of Christ's life at each moment of history.

Inculcation and popular piety

Finally, popular devotion must be recognized as a fundamental form of faith's "inculturation." Provided that popular piety does not convey ideas contrary to the Christian faith or forms of worship vitiated by syncretism, they are to be encouraged and may well contribute to the nurturing of a true Christian spirit. Constant discernment will be needed to ensure that expressions of inculturated faith consonant with the faith of the universal Church.

Guidelines for Harmonizing Popular Piety with the Liturgy

The second part of the Directory provides guidelines for harmonizing popular piety and the liturgy. The purpose of these guidelines is to facilitate the translation into concrete pastoral action of the principles already identified, and to ensure consistency and fruitfulness in pastoral activity. In this section, an overview of particular forms of piety related to the
Revisiting Popular Piety and Devotions

liturgical year, the veneration of the Mother of God and the saints, prayer for the dead, and practices related to shrines and pilgrimages is presented, and their relation to the liturgy is identified. In many ways, this is the most helpful part of the Directory.

Because of the length of these five chapters which make up the second part of the Directory, it is impossible to give a detailed commentary on every form of popular piety. However, the following list of subjects will give the reader a good sense of the scope of forms of popular piety and devotional practice that is addressed in the Directory. Hopefully, this listing will also encourage further reading and study, and pastoral implementation with a view to fostering popular piety in the context of liturgical renewal.

**Chapter Four: The Liturgical Year and popular piety**

**Sunday in:**

**Advent**
Advent wreath, Advent processions, the Winter Interstice, the Blessed Virgin Mary and Advent, the Christmas novena, the crib.

**Christmastide**
The spirituality of gift-giving, live cribs, the inauguration of the Christmas tree, the Christmas supper, the proclamation of the Saviour’s birth, kissing the image of the Child Jesus, the Feast of the Holy Family, the Feast of the Holy Innocents, December 31, the Solemnity of the Holy Mother of God, New Year’s Day, the Solemnity of the Lord’s Epiphany, the solemn proclamation of Easter and the principal dominical feasts, the exchange of “Epiphany gifts,” the blessing of homes, the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord.

**Lent**
Veneration of the Crucified Christ, reading of the Lord’s Passion, Via Crucis, Via Matris, Holy Week, Palm Sunday,

**Triduum**
Visiting the altar of repose; Good Friday: the Good Friday procession, passion plays, Our Lady of Dolours, the Planctus Maria, the *Ora della Desolata*; Holy Saturday: the *Ora della Madre*; Easter Sunday: the Risen Christ Meets his Mother, Blessing of the Family Table, Visit to the Mother of the Risen Christ.

**Eastertide**
The annual blessing of family homes, the *Via Lucis*, devotion to the Divine Mercy, the Pentecost novena, Pentecost Sunday.

**Ordinary Time**
Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity, the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, the Corpus Christi procession, Eucharistic adoration, the Sacred Heart of Jesus (and related devotions), the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the Most Precious Blood of Christ (and related devotions), the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

**Chapter Five: Veneration of the holy Mother of God**
Following a discussion on principles which ought to guide the devotions related to Mary, the Mother of God, the Directory addresses the following devotions:

• the celebration of Marian feasts, Saturdays, Marian months, celebrations of the Word of God, the Angelus Domini, Regina Coeli, the rosary, litanies of the Blessed Virgin Mary, consecration and entrustment to Mary, the brown scapular and other scapulars, medals, and the Akathistos hymn.

**Chapter Six: Veneration of the saints and beati**
The Directory discusses the saints in their role as historical witnesses to the universal
vocation to holiness, illustrious disciples of Christ, citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, intercessors and friends, and patrons. There follows a particular discussion of the following:

- Holy Angels, St. Joseph, St. John the Baptist,
- Cult due to the saints and to the beat: celebration of the saints, feast days, the Eucharist, the litany of saints, the relics of the saints, sacred images, processions.

**Chapter Seven: Suffrage for the dead**

In this chapter, the Directory discusses the meaning of prayer for the dead, Christian funeral practices, other forms of prayer for the dead, including the commemoration of All Souls, Masses for the dead, and other forms of memorial for the deceased.

**Chapter Eight: Shrines and pilgrimages**

The Directory describes the rationale for the erection of shrines and underlines the importance of canonical recognition by the local Ordinary. The Directory speaks of shrines first of all as places of cultic celebration which ought to be distinguished by exemplary liturgical celebrations. Helpful notes are provided in regard to celebrations of Penance, Eucharist, Anointing of the Sick, the Liturgy of the Hours, and sacramentals and blessings. Furthermore, the Directory points out that shrines are also places of evangelization, charitable and cultural centres, and places of ecumenical commitment.

The Directory situates modern-day pilgrimages in the context of biblical and early Christian pilgrimages and offers a fine synthesis of the spirituality of pilgrimage. It notes that pilgrimages possess eschatological, penitential, worship and apostolic dimensions. Lastly, the Directory offers thoughts on conducting pilgrimages.

**Conclusion**

The *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy* is a lengthy and somewhat cumbersome document to digest. Nevertheless, it is an important pastoral resource for liturgical renewal and fostering genuine popular devotion in harmony with the public prayer of the Church. It contains a wealth of pastoral guidelines, historical information and practical suggestions for the renewal of a variety of forms of popular piety and devotional exercises. Considerable time, study, discussion, and even pastoral experimentation will likely need to take place before the vision contained in this Directory is fully implemented. Nevertheless, the Directory will undoubtedly prove to be a useful guide to the realization of the renewal of Christian life envisioned by the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council.
Excerpts¹ from the
*Directory on Popular Piety
and the Liturgy: Principles and Guidelines*

Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments
Vatican City, 17 December 2001

**Introduction**

2. In its constitution on the Liturgy, the Second Vatican Council explicitly touched upon the relationship between the Liturgy and pious exercises. The question of popular piety has been more amply considered on various occasions by the Apostolic See and by the Conferences of Bishops. In his Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, John Paul II raised the question again in relation to the liturgical renewal and indicated that it remained among those to be addressed at a future date: “popular piety can neither be ignored nor treated with indifference or disrespect because of its richness and because in itself it represents an religious attitude in relation to God. However, it has to be continually evangelized, so that the faith which it expresses may become more mature and authentic. The pious exercises of the Christian people and other forms of devotion can be accepted and recommended provided that they do not become substitutes for the liturgy or integrated into the liturgical celebrations. An authentic pastoral promotion of the liturgy will know how to build on the riches of popular piety, purify them and direct them towards the liturgy as an offering of the people.”

5. The operative proposals of this Directory, which are intended solely for the Latin Church and primarily for the Roman Rite, are addressed firstly to the Bishops, whose office entails presiding over the worshipping community of the dioceses, promoting the liturgical life and coordinating other forms of worship with it. They are also intended for the bishops’ closest collaborators—their episcopal vicars, priests, deacons and especially the rectors of sanctuaries. These proposals are also intended for the major superiors of the institutes of consecrated life, male and female, since many forms of popular piety arose within, and were developed by, such institutes, and because the religious and the members of the secular institutes can contribute much to the proper harmonization of the various forms of popular piety with the Liturgy.

### Some Principles

An overview of the present Directory can be obtained from the following principles which are more fully developed and explained in the subsequent text.

*The primacy of the liturgy*

11. History shows that, in certain epochs, the life of faith is sustained by the forms and practices of piety, which the faithful have often felt more deeply and actively.

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¹ Readers are encouraged to read the whole of the document, which can be found on Vatican websites, and in printed form it is available from Paulist Press. See the footnote in the previous article for details.
than the liturgical celebrations. Indeed, "every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the Priest and of his Body, which is the Church, it is a sacred action surpassing all others. No other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title or to the same degree." Hence, the ambivalence that the liturgy is not "popular" must be overcame. The liturgical renewal of the Council set out to promote the participation of the people in the celebration of the liturgy, at certain times and places (through hymns, active participation, and lay ministries), which had previously given rise to forms of prayer alternative to, or substitutive of, the liturgical action itself.

The faithful should be made conscious of the preeminence of the liturgy over any other possible form of legitimate Christian prayer. While sacramental actions are necessary to life in Christ, the various forms of popular piety are properly optional. Such is clearly proven by the Church's precept which obliges attendance at Sunday Mass. No such obligation, however, has obtained with regard to pious exercises, notwithstanding their worthiness or their widespread diffusion. Such, however, may be assumed as obligations by a community or by individual members of the faithful.

The foregoing requires that the formation of priests and of the faithful give preeminence to liturgical prayer and to the liturgical year over any other form of devotion. However, this necessary preeminence is not to be interpreted in exclusive terms, nor in terms of opposition or marginalization.

**Evaluation and renewal**

12. The optional nature of pious exercises should in no way be taken to imply an under estimation or even disrespect for such practices. The way forward in this area requires a correct and wise appreciation of the many riches of popular piety, of the potentiality of these same riches and of the commitment to the Christian life which they inspire.

The Gospel is the measure against which all expressions of Christian piety—both old and new—must be measured. The task of evaluating devotional exercises and practices, and of purifying them when necessary, must be conducted against this criterion so as to ensure their proper relationship with the Christian mystery. What is said of the Christian liturgy is also true of popular piety: "it may never incorporate rites permeated by magic, superstition, animism, vendettas or sexual connotations."

Hence, the liturgical renewal willed by the Second Vatican Council must also inspire a correct evaluation and renewal of pious exercises and devotional practices. Popular piety should be permeated by: a biblical spirit, since it is impossible to imagine a Christian prayer without direct or indirect reference to Sacred Scripture; a liturgical spirit if it is to dispose properly for or echo the mysteries celebrated in the liturgical actions; an ecumenical spirit, in consideration of the sensibilities and traditions of other Christians without, however, being restricted by inappropriate inhibitions; an anthropological spirit which both conserves symbols and expressions of importance or significance for a given nation while eschewing senseless archaicisms, and which strives to dialogue in terms redolent with contemporary sensibility. To be successful, such a renewal must be imbued with a pedagogical awareness and realized gradually, always taking into consideration time and particular circumstances.

**Distinct from and in harmony with the liturgy**

13. The objective difference between pious exercises and devotional practices should always be clear in expressions of worship. Hence, the formulae proper to pious exercises should not be commingled with the liturgical actions. Acts of devotion and piety are external to the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, and of the other sacraments.

On the one hand, a superimposing of pious and devotional practices on the
liturgy so as to differentiate their language, rhythm, course, and theological emphasis from those of the corresponding liturgical action must be avoided, while any form of competition with or opposition to the liturgical actions, where such exists, must also be resolved. Thus, precedence must always be given to Sunday, solemnities, and to the liturgical seasons and days.

Since, on the other, pious practices must conserve their proper style, simplicity and language, attempts to impose forms of "liturgical celebration" on them are always to be avoided.

Sacred images

18. The use of sacred images is of major importance in the whole area of popular piety, since culturally and artistically they assist the faithful in encountering the mysteries of the Christian faith. Indeed, the veneration of sacred images belongs to the very nature of Catholic piety. Such is clear from its artistic patrimony, which can be seen in many churches and sanctuaries, and to which popular devotion has often contributed.

Here, the principles apply which govern the liturgical use of images of Christ, Our Lady, the saints. These have been traditionally asserted and defended by the Church in the knowledge that "the honour rendered to the image is directed to the person represented." The necessary rigour which has to be applied in drawing up the iconographic scheme of churches—in matters relating to the truths of the faith and their hierarchy, beauty and quality—must also be applied to images and objects destined for private and personal devotion.

So as to ensure that the iconography used in sacred places is not left to private initiatives, those with responsibility for churches and oratories should safeguard the dignity, beauty and quality of those sacred images exposed for public veneration. Likewise, they should avoid the de facto imposition on the community of pictures or statues inspired by the private devotion of individuals.

The bishops, therefore, and the rectors of sanctuaries are to ensure that the sacred images produced for the use of the faithful, either in their homes or on their persons, or those borne aloft on their shoulders, are not reduced to banalities, nor risk giving rise to error.

Sacred places

19. Apart from the church, sanctuaries—which are sometimes not churches—afford important opportunities for the expression of popular piety, which are often marked by particular devotional forms and practices, among which the most significant is that of pilgrimage. Together with these sacred places, which are clearly reserved for public and private prayer, others exist which are often not less important: e.g. homes, places of life and work. On certain occasions even the streets and squares can become places facilitating the manifestation of the faith.

Sacred times

20. The rhythm associated with the change from day to night, from one month to another, or of the seasons is often associated with various forms of popular piety. Such can also be true of particular days recalling joyous or tragic personal or community events. Above all, the "the feast days," with their preparations for various religious manifestations, have contributed much in forging the traditions peculiar to a given community.

Responsibilities and Competencies

21. Manifestations of popular piety are subject to the jurisdiction of the local Ordinary. It is for him to regulate such manifestations, to encourage them as a means of assisting the faithful in living the Christian life, and to purify and evangelize them where necessary. He is also to ensure that they do not substitute for the liturgy nor become part of the liturgical
celebrations. The local Ordinary also approves the prayers and formulae associated with acts of public piety and devotional practices. The dispositions given by a particular local Ordinary for the territory of his jurisdiction are for the particular Church entrusted to his pastoral care.

Hence, the faithful, both clerics and laity, either as groups or individuals, may not publicly promote prayers, formulae or private initiatives without the permission of the Ordinary.

In accordance with the Apostolic Constitution Pastor Bonus, n.70, it is the competence of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments to assist the bishops in matters relating to prayers and devotional practices of the Christian people, as well as to issue dispositions in those cases surpassing the bounds of a particular Church, and in imposing subsidiary provisions.

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55. Any unilateral exaltation of popular piety which fails to take account of the liturgy is inconsistent with the fact that the essential elements of the liturgy derive from the will of Christ himself, and is unable to emphasize its indispensable soteriological and doxological importance. Following the Lord's ascension to the glory of the Father, and the descent of the Holy Spirit, the perfect glorification of God and the salvation of man comes about primarily through the celebration of the liturgy, which requires an adherence of faith, and brings the believer to participate in the fundamental salvific event: the passion, death and resurrection of Christ (cf. Rom 6,2-6, 1 Cor 11,23-26).

The Church's understanding of her mystery, and her worshipping and saving actions, constantly affirms that it is through "the Liturgy,... especially in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, [that] 'the work of our redemption is accomplished'." This affirmation, however, does not deny the importance of other forms of piety.

56. Theoretical or practical contempt for the liturgy inevitably leads to a clouding of the Christian understanding of the mystery of God, Who has mercifully deigned to look down on fallen man and bring him to Himself through the incarnation of His Son and the gift of the Holy Spirit. This approach fails to perceive the significance of salvation history and the relationship between Old and New Testaments. It underestimates the saving Word of God which sustains the liturgy, and to which the liturgy always refers. Such a disposition attenuates in the faithful any realization of the importance of the work of Christ our only Saviour who is the Son of God and the Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Eventually, it leads to a loss of the sensus Ecclesiae.

57. Any exclusive promotion of popular piety, which should always be seen in terms of the Christian faith, can encourage a process that eventually leads the faithful away from Christian revelation and encourages the undue or distorted use of elements drawn from cosmic or natural religions. It can also give rise to the introduction into Christian worship of elements taken from pre-Christian beliefs, or that are merely cultural, national or ethnic psychological expressions. Likewise, the illusion can be created that the transcendent can be reached through unpurified religious experiences, thereby promoting the notion that salvation can be achieved through man's own personal efforts (the constant danger of pelagianism should never be forgotten), thereby compromising any authentic Christian understanding of salvation as a gratuitous gift of God. Indeed, the role of secondary mediators, such as the Blessed Virgin Mary, the angels and saints, or even national saints, can surpass that of the Lord Jesus Christ, the one Mediator, in the minds of the faithful.

58. The liturgy and popular piety, while not conterminous, remain two legitimate expressions of Christian worship. While not opposed to each other, neither are they to be regarded a equiparate to each
other. Rather, they are to be seen in harmony with each in accordance with the Council's liturgical constitution: "The popular devotions of the Christian people [...] should accord with the sacred liturgy...[and] in some way derive from it, and lead people to it, since in fact the liturgy by its very nature is far superior to any of them."

Hence, the liturgy and popular piety are two forms of worship which are in mutual and fruitful relationship with each other. In this relationship, however, the liturgy remains the primary reference point so as "clearly and prudently to channel the yearnings of prayer and the charismatic life" which are found in popular piety. For its part, popular piety, because of its symbolic and expressive qualities, can often provide the liturgy with important insights for inculturation and stimulate an effective dynamic creativity.

Importance of formation

59. In the light of the foregoing, it would seem that the formation of both clergy and laity affords a means of resolving many of the reasons underlying the imbalances between the liturgy and popular piety. Together with the necessary formation in liturgy, which is a long-term process, provision should also be made to complement it by re-discovering and exploring formation in popular piety, especially in view of the latter's importance for the enrichment of the spiritual life.

Since "the spiritual life...is not limited solely to participation in the liturgy," restricting the formation of those involved in assisting spiritual growth exclusively to the liturgy seems inadequate. Moreover, liturgical action, often reduced to participation at the Eucharist, cannot permeate a life lacking in personal prayer or in those qualities communicated by the traditional devotional forms of the Christian people. Current interest in oriental "religious" practices, under various guises, clearly indicates a quest for a spirituality of life, suffering, and sharing. The post-conciliar generation—depending on the country—often has never experienced the devotional practices of previous generations. Clearly, catechesis and educational efforts cannot overlook the patrimony of popular piety when proposing models for the spiritual life, especially those pious exercises commended by the Church's Magisterium.

Values in Popular Piety

61. Popular piety, according to the Magisterium, is a living reality in and of the Church. Its source is the constant presence of the Spirit of God in the ecclesial community; the mystery of Christ Our Saviour is its reference point, the glory of God and the salvation of man its object, its historical moment "the joyous encounter of the work of evangelisation and culture." On several occasions, the Magisterium has expressed its esteem for popular piety and its various manifestations, admonishing those who ignore it, or overlook it, or even disdain it, to adopt a more positive attitude towards it, taking due note of its many values. Indeed, the Magisterium sees popular piety as "a true treasure of the People of God."

The Magisterium's esteem for popular piety is principally motivated by the values which it incorporates.

Popular piety has an innate sense of the sacred and the transcendent, manifests a genuine thirst for God and "an acute sense of God's deepest attributes: fatherhood, providence, constant and loving presence," and mercy.

The documents of the Magisterium highlight certain interior dispositions and virtues particularly consonant with popular piety and which, in turn, are prompted and nourished by it: patience and "Christian resignation in the face of irremediable situations"; trusting abandonment to God; the capacity to bear sufferings and to perceive "the cross in every-day life"; a genuine desire to please the Lord and to do reparation and penance for the offences offered to Him;
detachment from material things; solidarity with, and openness to, others; "a sense of friendliness, charity and family unity."

62. Popular piety can easily direct its attention to the Son of God who, for love of mankind, became a poor, small child, born of a simple humble woman. Likewise, it has a particular sensibility for the mystery of passion and death of Christ.

Contemplation of the mystery of the afterlife is an important feature of popular piety, as is its interest in communion with the saints in heaven, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the angels, and suffrage for the souls of the dead.

63. That harmonious fusion of the Gospel message with a particular culture, which is often found in popular piety, is a further reason for the Magisterium's esteem of popular piety. In genuine forms of popular piety, the Gospel message assimilates expressive forms particular to a given culture while also permeating the consciousness of that culture with the content of the Gospel, and its idea of life and death, and of man's freedom, mission and destiny.

The transmission of this cultural heritage from father to son, from generation to generation, also implies the transmission of Christian principles. In some cases, this fusion goes so deep that elements proper to the Christian faith become integral elements of the cultural identity of particular nations. Devotion to the Mother of the God would be an example of this.

64. The Magisterium also highlights the importance of popular piety for the faith-life of the People of God, for the conservation of the faith itself and in inspiring new efforts at evangelization.

It is impossible to overlook "those devotions practised in certain regions by the faithful with fervour and a moving purity of intention"; that authentic popular piety "in virtue of its essentially Catholic roots is an antidote to the sects and a guarantee of fidelity to the message of salvation"; that popular piety has been a providential means of preserving the faith in situations where Christians have been deprived of pastoral care; that in areas in which evangelization has been deficient, "the people for the most part express their faith primarily through popular piety"; that popular piety is an important and indispensable "starting point in deepening the faith of the people and in bringing it to maturity."

Deviations in Popular Piety

64. While the Magisterium highlights the undeniable qualities of popular piety, it does not hesitate to point out dangers which can affect it: lack of a sufficient number of Christian elements such as the salvific significance of the Resurrection of Christ, an awareness of belonging to the Church, the person and action of the Holy Spirit; a disproportionate interest between the saints and the absolute sovereignty of Jesus Christ and his mysteries; lack of direct contact with Sacred Scripture; isolation from the Church's sacramental life; a dichotomy between worship and the duties of Christian life; a utilitarian view of some forms of popular piety; the use of "signs, gestures and formulae, which sometimes become excessively important or even theatrical"; and in certain instances, the risk of "promoting sects, or even superstition, magic, fatalism or oppression."

65. In its attempts to remedy such defects in popular piety, the contemporary Magisterium has insistently stressed the need to "evangelize" popular piety, and sees it in relation to the Gospel which "will progressively free it from its defects; purify it, consolidate it and clarify that which is ambiguous by referring it to the contents of faith, hope and charity."

Pastoral sensibility recommends that the work of "evangelizing" popular piety should proceed patiently, tolerantly, and with great prudence, following the methodology adopted by the Church throughout the centuries in matters relat-
ing to inculturation of the Christian faith, the sacred liturgy and those inherent in popular piety.

The Subject of Popular Piety

67. The Church's Magisterium, mindful that "the spiritual life ... is not limited solely to participation in the liturgy" and that "the Christian ... must enter into his bedroom to pray to his Father in secret," indeed, "according to the teaching of the apostle, he must pray without ceasing," holds that the subject of the various forms of prayer is every Christian—clerics, religious and laity—both privately when moved by the Spirit of Christ, and when praying with the community in groups of different origins and types.

68. Pope John Paul II has shown how the family can be a subject of popular piety. The exhortation Familiaris Consortio, having praised the family as the domestic sanctuary of the Church, emphasizes that "as preparation for worship celebrated in church, and as its prolongation in the home, the Christian family makes use of prayer, which presents a variety of forms. While this variety testifies to the extraordinary riches with which the Spirit vivifies Christian prayer, it serves also the various needs and life situations of those who turn to the Lord in prayer." It also observes that "apart from morning and evening prayers, certain prayers are to be expressly encouraged, ... such as reading and meditating on the word of God, preparation for the reception of the sacraments, devotion and consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the various forms of the veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary, grace before and after meals, and observance of popular devotions."

69. Equally important subjects of popular piety are the confraternities and other pious associations of the faithful. In addition to their charitable and social endeavours, they have an institutional commitment to foster Christian cult, in relation to the Trinity, to Christ in his mysteries, to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to the angels and saints, in relation to the beatit, and in promoting suffrage for the souls of the faithful departed.

The Confraternities often observe, side by side with the liturgical calendar, their own proper calendars which indicate particular feasts, offices, novenas, septenaria, tridua, penitential days, processions, pilgrimages, and those days on which specific works of mercy are to be done. They also have their own devotional books and insignia such as medals, habits, cinctures, and even their own places of worship and cemeteries.

The Church recognizes the confraternities and grants juridical personality to them, approves their statutes and fosters their cultic ends and activities. They should, however, avoid conflict and isolation by prudent involvement in parochial and diocesan life.

Pious Exercises

70. Pious exercises are typical expressions of popular piety. In origin and content, in language and style, in usage and subject, they greatly differ among each other. The Second Vatican Council gave consideration to pious exercises, reiterating that they were highly to be recommended, and indicated those criteria which authenticate their legitimacy and validity.

71. In the light of the nature and of the characteristics proper to Christian worship, pious exercises clearly must conform to the doctrine, legal discipline and norms of the Church. Moreover, they should be in harmony with the sacred liturgy, take into account the seasons of the liturgical calendar, in so far as possible, and encourage "conscious active participation in the prayer of the Church."

72. Pious exercises are part of Christian worship. The Church has always been attentive to ensure that God is glorified worthily through them, and that man derives spiritual benefit from them and is encouraged to the live the Christian life.

The actions of pastors in relation to pious exercises have been many. They have
recommended and encouraged them, or
guided and corrected them or simply
tolerated them. Among the myriad of pious
exercises, some must be mentioned, espe-
cially those erected by the Apostolic See,
or which have been recommended by the
same Apostolic See throughout the ages.
Mention must also be made of the pious
exercises of the particular Churches “that
are undertaken by order of the bishops
according to customs or books lawfully
approved”; of the pious exercises that are
practised in accordance with the particu-
lar law or tradition of certain religious
families, or confraternities, or other pious
associations of the faithful, since such
have often received the explicit approba-
tion of the Church; and of the pious exer-
cises practised personally or in the home.
Some pious exercises which grew up
among the community of the faithful and
have received the approbation of the
Magisterium, also enjoy the concession of
indulgences.

Liturgy and Pious Exercises

73. The Church’s teaching on the rela-
tionship of Liturgy and pious exercises
may be summarized as follows: the sacred
liturgy, in virtue of its very nature, is by far
superior to pious exercises, and hence pas-
toral praxis must always accord to the
sacred liturgy “that preeminent position
proper to it in relation to pious exercises”;
liturgy and pious exercises must co-exist
in accordance with the hierarchy of val-
ues and the nature specific to both of
these cultic expressions.

74. Careful attention to these principles
should lead to a real effort to harmonize,
in so far as possible, pious exercises with
the rhythm and demands of the liturgy,
thereby avoiding any “mixture or admix-
ture of these two forms of piety.” This in
turn ensures that no hybrid, or confused
forms emerge from mixing liturgy and
pious exercises, not that the latter, con-
trary to the mind of the Church, are elim-
ninated, often leaving an unfilled void to
the great detriment of the faithful.

General Principles for the
Renewal of Pious Exercises

75. The Apostolic See has not failed to
indicate those theological, pastoral, his-
torical, and literary principles by which a
renewal of pious exercises is to be effected.
It has also signalled the manner in which
they should reflect a biblical and liturgical
spirit, as well as an ecumenical one. The
criteria established by the Holy See
emphasize how the essential nucleus of
the various pious exercises is to be identi-
fied by means of an historical investiga-
tion, and also reflect something of con-
temporary spirituality. Pious exercises
are also required to take due account of
the implications of a healthy anthropol-
ogy. They should respect the culture and
expressive style of the peoples who use
them without, however, losing those tra-
ditional elements that are rooted in popu-
lar customs.

The Life of Worship: Communion
with the Father, Through Christ,
in the Holy Spirit

78. In the life of communion with the
Father, the faithful are guided by the
Spirit (cf. Rom 8, 14) who has been given
progressively to transform them in Christ.
He pours out to them “the spirit of
adopted sons,” by which they assimilate
the filial disposition of Christ (cf. Rom 8,
15-17), and his sentiments (cf. Phil 2,5).
He makes present the teaching of Christ
to the faithful (cf. John 14,26; 16, 13-25)
so that they may interpret the events of
life in its light. He brings them to a
knowledge of the depths of God (cf. 1 Cor
2, 10) and enables them to transform
their lives into a “holy sacrifice” (Rom 12,
1). He sustains them in rejection and in
the trials that must be faced during the
process of transforming themselves in
Christ. The Spirit is given to sustain,
nourish and direct their prayer: “The
Spirit too comes to help us in our weak-
ness. For when we cannot choose words in
order to pray properly, the Spirit himself
expresses our plea in a way that could
never be put into words, and God who knows everything in our hearts knows perfectly well what he means, and that the pleas of the saints expressed by the Spirit are according to the mind of God” (Rom 8, 26-27).

Christian worship originates in and draws impetus from the Spirit. That same worship begins, and is brought to completion, in the Spirit. It can therefore be concluded that without the Spirit of Christ there can be neither authentic liturgical worship, nor genuine expressions of popular piety.

79. From the principles already outlined above, popular piety should always be formed as a moment of the dialogue between God and man, through Christ in the Holy Spirit. Despite some deficiencies—such as confusion between God the Father and Jesus Christ—popular piety does bare a Trinitarian mark.

Popular piety, indeed, is especially susceptible to the mystery of God’s paternity and arouses a sense of awe for His goodness, power and wisdom. It rejoices in the beauty of creation and gives thanks to God for it. Popular piety can express an awareness of the justice and mercy of God the Father, and of His care for the poor and lowly, and it can proclaim that He commends the good and rewards those who live properly and honestly, while abhorring evil and casting away from Himself those who obstinately follow the path of hatred, violence, injustice and deceit.

Popular piety can easily concentrate on the person of Christ, Son of God and Saviour of mankind. It can movingly recount the birth of Christ and intuit the immense love released by the child Jesus, true God and true man, a true brother in poverty and persecution from the moment of his birth. Innumerable scenes from the public life of Christ, the Good Shepherd who reaches out to sinners and publicans, the miracle-worker healing the sick and helping the poor, or the Teacher proclaiming the truth, can be represented in popular piety. Above all, it has the capacity to contemplate the mysteries of Christ’s Passion because in them it can perceive Christ’s boundless love and the extent of his solidarity with human suffering: Jesus betrayed and abandoned, scourged and crowned with thorns, crucified between thieves, taken down from the cross and buried in the earth, and mourned by his friends and disciples.

Popular piety is also consciously aware of the person of the Holy Spirit in the mystery of God. It professes that “through the Holy Spirit” the Son of God “became incarnate of Virgin Mary and was made man” and that the Spirit was poured out to the Apostles at the beginning of the Church (cf. Acts 2, 1-13). Popular piety is especially conscious that the power of the Spirit of God, whose seal is placed on all Christians in the sacrament of Confirmation, is alive in all of the Church’s sacraments; that baptism is conferred, sins forgiven, and the Holy Eucharist begun “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”; and that all prayer in the Christian community, and the invocation of divine blessing on mankind and all creatures is done in the name of the three Divine Persons.

80. Reference to the Most Blessed Trinity, while seminally present in popular piety, is an element requiring further emphasis. The following points offer an outline of how that might be done:

• The faithful require instruction on the character of Christian prayer, which is directed to the Father, through the mediation of the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

• The formulae used in popular piety should give greater emphasis to the person and action of the Holy Spirit. The lack of a “name” for the Spirit of God and the custom of not representing him anthropomorphically have contributed to a certain absence of the Holy Spirit in the texts and formulae of popular piety, while not overlooking the role of music and gestures in expressing our relationship with the
Holy Spirit. This lacuna, however, can be overcome by the evangelization of	opular piety, as the Magisterium has already recommended on several occasions.

- It is also necessary for popular piety to emphasize the primary and basic
  importance of the Resurrection of Christ. The loving devotion for the
  suffering of Christ, often demonstrated by popular piety, should also be com-
  pleted by setting it in the context of his glorification so as to give integral
  expression to the salvific plan of God as revealed in Christ, and allow for its
  inextricable link with his paschal mystery. Only in this manner can the
  authentic face of Christianity be seen with its victory over death and its
  celebration of him who is “God of the living and not of the dead” (Matt 22, 32),
  of Christ, the living one, who was dead but now lives forever (cf. Apoc 1, 28)
  and of the Spirit “who is Lord and giver of life.”

- Finally, devotion to the Passion of Christ should lead the faithful to a full
  and conscious participation in the Eucharist, in which the Body of Christ,
  sacrificed for our sake (cf. 1 Cor 11, 24) is given as food; and in which the
  Blood of Christ, shed on the cross in the new and eternal covenant and for
  the remission of sin, is given to drink. Such participation has its highest and
  most significant moment in the celebration of the Paschal Triduum, apex
  of the liturgical year, and in the Sunday celebration of the sacred mysteries.

The Church:
Worshipping Community

81. The Church, “gathered in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the
Holy Spirit,” is a worshipping community. By command of her Lord and Founder,
the Church effects many acts of worship whose object is the glory God and the
sanctification of man. In different ways and in different measure, these are all cele-
btrations of the paschal mystery of Christ, and aimed at realizing the divine will to
gather the scattered children [of the Father] into the unity of a single nation.

In her ritual actions, the Church pro-
claims the Gospel of salvation and
announces the death and resurrection of
Christ, and actualizes the work of his sal-
vation in sacred signs. In the Eucharist
she celebrates the memorial of his blessed
Passion, his glorious resurrection, and
Ascension. In the celebration of the other
sacraments she draws from the gifts of the
Holy Spirit which flow from the cross of
our Saviour. The Church glorifies the
Father in psalms and hymns for the won-
ders that He has accomplished in the
death and exaltation of Christ His Son,
and supplicates that the saving mystery of
Easter might reach all mankind. With the
sacramentals which have been instituted
to assist the faithful at various times and
in various situations, she prays that their
activity might be directed and enlight-
ened by the Spirit of Easter.

82. The celebration of the liturgy, how-
ever, does not exhaust the Church’s
divine worship. Following the example
and the teaching of the Lord, the disciples
of Christ pray in the seclusion of their
rooms (cf. Matt 6, 6), they gather to pray
according to forms created by men and
women of great religious experience, who
have encouraged the faithful and oriented
their piety towards specific aspects of the
mystery of Christ. They also pray accord-
ing to structures which have emerged
practically spontaneously from the collec-
tive Christian consciousness, in which
the demands of popular culture harmo-
niously convey the essential data of the
Gospel message.

83. Authentic forms of popular piety are
also fruits of the Holy Spirit and must
always be regarded as expressions of the
Church’s piety. They are used by the
faithful who are in communion with the
Church, accept her faith and who are
docile to her discipline of worship.
Indeed, many forms popular piety have
been approved and recommended by the
Church herself.
84. Popular piety, as an expression of ecclesial piety, is subject to the general discipline of Christian worship and to the Church's pastoral authority which exercises a role of discernment and authentification in relation to it. The Church renews popular piety by placing it in fertile contact with the revealed Word, tradition and the sacred liturgy itself.

On the other hand, expressions of popular piety must always be open to the "ecclesiological principle" of Christian worship. In this way:

- popular piety can have a correct understanding of the relationship between the particular Church and the universal Church. When popular piety concentrates on local or immediate issues, it risks closing itself to universal values and to ecclesiological perspectives;
- the veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of the angels and saints, and suffrage for the dead should be set in the vast context of the relationship between the heavenly Church and the pilgrim Church on earth;
- the relationship between ministry and charism should be properly understood, while the former is necessary for divine worship, the latter is frequently found in manifestations of popular piety.

Common Priesthood and Popular Piety

85. Through the sacraments of Christian initiation, the faithful become part of the Church, a prophetic, priestly and royal people called to worship God in spirit and in truth (cf. John 4, 23). The Church exercises this task through Christ in the Holy Spirit, not only in the sacred liturgy, especially in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, but also in other forms of the Christian life, among which are numbered the various forms of popular piety. The Holy Spirit confers the ability to offer sacrifices of praise to God, to offer prayer and entreaty to Him, so as to make of one's life "a living and holy sacrifice, pleasing to God" (Rom 12, 1; Heb 12, 28).

86. On this priestly basis, popular piety assists the faithful in persevering in prayer and in praising God the Father, in witnessing to Christ (cf. Acts 2, 42-47), and in sustaining their vigilance until He comes again in glory. It also justifies our hope, in the Holy Spirit, of life eternal (cf. 1 Pet 3, 15) and conserves important aspects of a specific cultic context, and, in different ways and in varying degrees, expresses those ecclesial values which arise and develop within the mystical Body of Christ.

Word of God and Popular Piety

88. Prayer should "accompany the reading of Sacred Scripture, so that a dialogue takes place between God and man." Thus, it is highly recommended that the various forms of popular piety normally include biblical texts, opportunely chosen and duly provided with a commentary.

89. In this respect, the models used in liturgical celebrations can be most useful, since they always contain a text taken from Sacred Scripture, variously chosen for different types of celebration. However, since the different expressions of popular piety already exhibit a legitimate structural and expressional diversity, the disposition of the various biblical pericopes need not necessarily be followed in the same ritual structure with which the Word of God is proclaimed in the sacred liturgy.

In any event, the liturgical model can serve as a touch stone for popular piety, against which a correct scale of values can be developed, whose first concern is hearing God when He speaks. It encourages popular piety to discover the harmony between the Old and New Testaments and to interpret one in the light of the other. From its centuries-long experience, the liturgical model also provides praiseworthy solutions for the correct application of the biblical message and provides a valid criterion to judge the authenticity of prayer.
In choosing biblical texts, it is always desirable to take short texts, that are easily memorized, incisive, and easily understood, even if difficult to actualize. Certain forms of popular piety, such as the Via Crucis and the rosary, encourage the use of Sacred Scripture, which can easily be related to particular prayers or gestures that have been learned by heart, especially those biblical passages recounting the life of Christ which are easily remembered.

Popular Piety and Private Revelation

90. Popular piety has always been interested in extraordinary happenings and events that are not infrequently connected with private revelations. While not confined to Marian piety alone, this phenomenon is particularly involved with “appearances” and “messages.” In this regard, it is useful to recall what the Catechism of the Catholic Church says about private revelation: “Throughout the ages, there have been so-called private revelations, some of which have been recognized by the authority of the Church. They do not belong, however, to the deposit of faith. It is not their role to improve or complete Christ's definitive Revelation, but to help live more fully by it in a certain period of history. Guided by the Magisterium of the Church, the sensus fidelium knows how to discern and welcome in these revelations whatever constitutes an authentic call of Christ or his saints to the Church” (n. 67).

Inculturation and Popular Piety

91. Popular piety is naturally marked by historical and cultural factors. The sheer variety of its expressions is an indicator of that fact. It reflects forms of popular piety that have arisen and been accepted in many particular Churches throughout the ages, and are a sure sign of the extent to which the faith has taken root in the hearts of particular peoples, and of its influence on the daily lives of the faithful. Indeed, “popular piety is the first and most fundamental form of the faith's “incultur-ation,” and should be continually guided and oriented by the liturgy, which, in its turn, nourishes the faith though the heart.” The encounter between the innovative dynamism of the Gospel message and the various elements of a given culture is affirmed in popular piety.

The Liturgical Year and Popular Piety

94. The liturgical year is the temporal structure within which the Church celebrates the holy mysteries of Christ: “From the Incarnation and the Nativity to the Ascension, to Pentecost and to the wait in joyful hope for the Lord's coming.”

In the liturgical year, “the celebration of the Paschal Mystery ... is the most privileged moment in the daily, weekly and annual celebration of Christian worship.” Consequently, the priority of the liturgical year over any other devotional form or practice must be regarded as a touchstone for the relationship between Liturgy and popular piety.

Sunday

95. Since the “Lord's day” is the “primordial feast” and “basis and centre of the liturgical year,” it cannot be subordinated to popular piety. Hence, pious exercises whose main chronological reference point is Sunday should not be encouraged. For the pastoral good of the faithful, it is, however, licit to take up on the Sundays “per annum” those celebrations of the Lord, or in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary or the saints which occur during the week and which are particularly significant in popular piety, provided that they have precedence over Sundays in the tables published with the Roman calendar.

Given that popular or cultural traditions can sometimes be invasive of the Sunday celebration and deprive it of its Christian character, “there is a need for special pastoral attention to the many situations
where there is a risk that the popular and cultural traditions of a region may intrude upon the celebration of Sundays and other liturgical feast-days, mingling the spirit of genuine Christian faith with elements which are foreign to it and may distort it. In such cases, catechesis and well-chosen pastoral initiatives need to clarify these situations, eliminating all that is incompatible with the Gospel of Christ. At the same time, it should not be forgotten that these traditions—and, by analogy, some recent cultural initiatives in civil society—often embody values which are not difficult to integrate with the demands of faith. It rests with the discernment of pastors to preserve the genuine values found in the culture of a particular social context and especially in popular piety, so that liturgical celebration—above all on Sundays and holy days—does not suffer but rather may actually benefit.”

In Advent

96. Advent is a time of waiting, conversion and of hope:
- waiting—memory of the first, humble coming of the Lord in our mortal flesh; waiting—supplication for his final, glorious coming as Lord of history and universal Judge;
- conversion, to which the liturgy at this time often refers quoting the prophets, especially John the Baptist, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt 3,2);
- joyful hope that the salvation already accomplished by Christ (cf. Rom 8, 24-25) and the reality of grace in the world, will mature and reach their fullness, thereby granting us what is promised by faith, and “we shall become like him for we shall see him as he really is” (John 3,2).

97. Popular piety is particularly sensitive to Advent, especially when seen as the memory of the preparation for the coming of the Messiah. The Christian people are deeply conscious of the long period of expectation that preceded the birth of our Saviour. The faithful know that God sustained Israel's hope in the coming of the Messiah by the prophets.

Popular piety is not unaware of this extraordinary event. Indeed, it is awestruck at the prospect of the God of glory taking flesh in the womb of the humble and lowly Virgin Mary. The faithful are particularly sensitive to the difficulties faced by the Virgin Mary during her pregnancy, and are deeply moved by the fact that there was no room at the inn for Joseph and Mary, just as she was about to give birth to the Christ child (cf Luke 2,7).

The Advent wreath

98. Placing four candles on green fronds has become a symbol of Advent in many Christian homes, especially in the Germanic countries and in North America.

The Advent wreath, with the progressive lighting of its four candles, Sunday after Sunday, until the Solemnity of Christmas, is a recollection of the various stages of salvation history prior to Christ’s coming and a symbol of the prophetic light gradually illuminating the long night prior to the rising of the Sun of justice (cf. Mal 3,20; Luke 1,78).

The Blessed Virgin Mary and Advent

The liturgy frequently celebrates the Blessed Virgin Mary in an exemplary way during the season of Advent. It recalls the women of the Old Testament who prefigured and prophesied her mission; it exalts her faith and the humility with which she promptly and totally submitted to God’s plan of salvation; it highlights her presence in the events of grace preceding the birth of the Saviour. Popular piety also devotes particular attention to the Blessed Virgin Mary during Advent, as is evident from the many pious exercises practised at this time, especially the novena of the Immaculate Conception and of Christmas.

However, the significance of Advent, “that time which is particularly apt for the cult of the Mother of God,” is such that it
cannot be represented merely as a “Marian month.”

102. The Feast of the Immaculate Conception, which is profoundly influential among the faithful, is an occasion for many displays of popular piety and especially for the novena of the Immaculate Conception. There can be no doubt that the feast of the pure and sinless conception of the Virgin Mary, which is a fundamental preparation for the Lord’s coming into the world, harmonizes perfectly with many of the salient themes of Advent. This feast also makes reference to the long messianic waiting for the Saviour’s birth and recalls events and prophecies from the Old Testament, which are also used in the liturgy of Advent.

The novena of the Immaculate Conception, wherever it is celebrated, should highlight the prophetic texts which begin with Gen 3,15, and end in Gabriel’s salutation of the one who is “full of grace” (Luke 1, 31-33).

The approach of Christmas is celebrated throughout the American continent with many displays of popular piety, centred on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe (12 December), which dispose the faithful to receive the Saviour at his birth. Mary, who was “intimately united with the birth of the Church in America, became the radiant star illuminating the proclamation of Christ the Saviour to the sons of these nations.”

The Christmas novena

103. The Christmas novena began as a means of communicating the riches of the liturgy to the faithful who were unable easily to grasp it. It has played a very effective role and can continue to play such a role. At the same time, in current conditions where the faithful have easier access to the liturgy, it would seem desirable that vespers from the 17-23 of December should be more solemn by adopting the use of the “major antiphons,” and by inviting the faithful to participate at the celebration. Such a celebration, held either before or after which the popular devotions to which the faithful are particularly attached, would be an ideal “Christmas novena,” in full conformity with the liturgy and mindful of the needs of the faithful. Some elements, such as the homily, the use of incense, and the intercessions, could also be expanded within the celebration of Vespers.

The crib

104. As is well known, in addition to the representations of the crib found in churches since antiquity, the custom of building cribs in the home was widely promoted from the thirteenth century, influenced undoubtedly by St. Francis of Assisi’s crib in Greccio. Their preparation, in which children play a significant role, is an occasion for the members of the family to come into contact with the mystery of Christmas, as they gather for a moment of prayer or to read the biblical accounts of the Lord’s birth.

Popular piety and the spirit of Advent

105. Popular piety, because of its intuitive understanding of the Christian mystery, can contribute effectively to the conservation of many of the values of Advent, which are not infrequently threatened by the commercialization of Christmas and consumer superficiality.

Popular piety perceives that it is impossible to celebrate the Lord’s birth except in an atmosphere of sobriety and joyous simplicity and of concern for the poor and marginalized. The expectation of the Lord’s birth makes us sensitive to the value of life and the duties to respect and defend it from conception. Popular piety intuitively understands that it is not possible coherently to celebrate the birth of him “who saves his people from their sins” without some effort to overcome sin in one’s own life, while waiting vigilantly for Him who will return at the end of time.

Christmastide

107. In addition to these celebrations recalling the primary meaning of Christmas, there are also other celebrations closely connected with the mystery of the
Lord's manifestation: the martyrdom of the Holy Innocents (28 December) whose blood was shed because of hatred for Jesus and because of Herod's rejection of his lordship; the memorial of the Holy Name of Jesus, 13 January; the feast of the Holy Family (Sunday in the octave of Christmas) celebrating the holy family in which Jesus "grew in wisdom and grace before God and men" (Luke 2, 52); the solemnity of the 1 January which recalls the divine, virginal and salvific motherhood of the Blessed Virgin Mary; and, although outside of Christmastide, the feast of the Presentation of the Lord (2 February), celebrating the encounter between the Messiah and his people, represented by Simeon and Anna, and the prophecy of Simeon.

108. Much of the richness and complexity of the mystery of the Lord's manifestation is reflected in displays of popular piety, which is especially sensitive to the childhood of Christ which reveals his love for us. Popular piety intuitively grasps:

- the importance of the "spirituality of gift," which is proper to Christmas: "a child is born for us, a son is given to us" (cf. Is 9, 5), a gift expressing the infinite love of God, who "so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (John 3, 16);
- the message of solidarity conveyed by the event of Christmas: solidarity with sinful man, for whom, in Christ, God became man "for us men and for our salvation"; solidarity with the poor, because the Son of God was rich but became poor for your sake, to make you rich out of your poverty" (2 Cor 8, 9);
- the sacredness of human life and the wonderful event that is every birth, since the Word of life came amongst men and was made visible through his birth of the Virgin Mary (cf. 1 John 1, 2);
- the messianic joy and peace to which man has aspired in every age: the angels announce the birth of the Saviour of the world to the shepherds, the "Prince of Peace (Is 9,5) and proclaim "peace on earth to men of good will" (Luke 2, 14);
- the spirit of simplicity and poverty, humility and trust in God, suggested by the events surrounding the birth of Christ.

Popular piety, precisely because it can intuit the values inherent in the mystery of Christ's birth, is called upon to cooperate in preserving the memory of the manifestation of the Lord, so as to ensure that the strong religious tradition surrounding Christmas is not secularized by consumerism or the infiltration of various forms of neopaganism.

Christmas Eve

109. In the space of time between the first Vespers of Christmas and Midnight Mass, both the tradition of Christmas carols, which are potent means of conveying the Christmas message of peace and joy, and popular piety propose certain forms of prayers, differing from country to country, which should be cherished and, where necessary, made consonant with the celebration of the liturgy: These would include:

- "live cribs" and the inauguration of the crib in the homes of the faithful which is an opportunity for family prayer: this prayer should include a reading of St. Luke's account of the birth of Christ, the typical Christmas carols, as well as prayers of petition and praise, especially those of children who are the protagonists in such family moments;
- the inauguration of the Christmas tree. This event also offers an opportunity for family prayer. Apart from its historical origins, the Christmas tree has become a potent symbol to-day and is very diffuse amongst Christians; it evokes both the tree planted in the centre of Eden (Gen 2, 9), and the tree of the Cross, which lends it a Christological significance: Christ is the true tree of life, born of human stock, of the Virgin Mary, the tree which is always green and productive. In the Nordic countries, the tree is decorated with apples and hosts.
"Gifts" can be added; but among the gifts placed under the tree, something should be included for the poor since they belong to every Christian family;

• the Christmas supper. The Christian family, which traditionally blesses the table and gives thanks to the Lord for the gift of food, performs this ceremony with greater intensity at the Christmas supper which gives potent concrete expression to the joy of family ties.

111. At Midnight Mass, an event of major liturgical significance and of strong resonance in popular piety, the following could be given prominence:

• at the beginning of Mass, the proclamation of the Saviour's birth according the formula contained in the Roman Martyrology could be made in song;
• the prayer of the faithful should really be universal, and where appropriate, use several languages; and the poor should always be remembered in the presentation of the gifts;
• at the end of Mass, the faithful could be invited to kiss the image of the Child Jesus, which is then placed in a crib erected in the church or somewhere nearby.

Veneration of the Holy Mother of God

Some principles

183. Popular devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary is an important and universal ecclesial phenomenon. Its expressions are multifarious and its motivation very profound, deriving as it does from the People of God's faith in, and love for, Christ, the Redeemer of mankind, and from an awareness of the salvific mission that God entrusted to Mary of Nazareth, because of which she is mother not only of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but also of mankind in the order of grace.

Indeed, "the faithful easily understand the vital link uniting Son and Mother. They realise that the Son is God and that she, the mother, is also their mother. They intuit the immaculate holiness of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and in venerating her as the glorious queen of heaven, they are absolutely certain that she who is full of mercy intercedes for them. Hence, they confidently have recourse to her patronage. The poorest of the poor feel especially close to her. They know that she, like them, was poor, and greatly suffered in meekness and patience. They can identify with her suffering at the crucifixion and death of her Son, as well as rejoice with her in his resurrection. The faithful joyfully celebrate her feasts, make pilgrimage to her sanctuary, sing hymns in her honour, and make votive offerings to her. They instinctively distrust whoever does not honour her and will not tolerate those who dishonour her."

The Church exhorts all the faithful—sacred minister, religious and laity—to develop a personal and community devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary through the use of approved and recommended pious exercises. Liturgical worship, notwithstanding its objective and irreplaceable importance, its exemplary efficacy and normative character, does not in fact exhaust all the expressive possibilities of the People of God for devotion to the Holy Mother of God.

184. The relationship between the liturgy and popular Marian piety should be regulated by the principles and norms already mentioned in this document. In relation to Marian devotion, the liturgy must be the "exemplary form," source of inspiration, constant reference point and ultimate goal of Marian devotion.

185. Here, it will be useful to recall some pronouncements of the Church's Magisterium on Marian devotions. These should always be adhered to when developing new pious exercises or in revising those already in use, or simply in activating them in worship. The care and attention of the pastors of the Church for Marian devotions are due to their importance, since they are both a fruit and an expression of Marian piety among the
people and the ecclesial community, and a significant means of promoting the “Marian formation” of the faithful, as well as in determining the manner in which the piety of the faithful for the Blessed Virgin Mary is moulded.

186. The fundamental principle of the Magisterium with regard to such pious exercises is that they should be derivative from the “one worship which is rightly called Christian, because it efficaciously originates in Christ, finds full expression in Christ, and through Him, in the Holy Spirit leads to the Father.” Hence, Marian devotions, in varying degrees and modes, should:

- give expression to the Trinitarian note which characterises worship of the God revealed in the New Testament, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; the pneumatological aspect, since every true form of piety comes from the Spirit and is exercised in the Spirit; the ecclesial character, in virtue of which the faithful are constituted as the holy people of God, gathered in prayer in the Lord’s name (cf. Matt 18, 20) in the vital communion of saints;
- have constant recourse to Sacred Scripture, as understood in Sacred Tradition; not overlook the demands of the ecumenical movement in the Church’s profession of faith; consider the anthropological aspects of cultic expressions so as to reflect a true concept of man and a valid response to his needs; highlight the eschatological tension which is essential to the Gospel message; make clear missionary responsibility and the duty of bearing witness, which are incumbent on the Lord’s disciples.

Times of pious Marian exercises

Celebration of feasts

187. Practically all Marian devotions and pious exercises are in some way related to the liturgical feasts of the General Calendar of the Roman Rite or of the particular calendars of dioceses and religious families. Sometimes, a particular devotion antedates the institution of the feast (as is the case with the feast of the Holy Rosary), in other instances, the feast is much more ancienit than the devotion (as with the Angelus Domini). This clearly illustrates the relationship between the liturgy and pious exercises, and the manner in which pious exercises find their culmination in the celebration of the feast. In so far as liturgical, the feast refers to the history of salvation and celebrates a particular aspect of the relationship of the Virgin Mary to the mystery of Christ. The feast, however, must be celebrated in accordance with liturgical norm, and bear in mind the hierarchal difference between “liturgical acts” and associated “pious exercises.”

It should not be forgotten that a feast of the Blessed Virgin, in so far as it is popular manifestation, also has important anthropological implications that cannot be overlooked.

Saturdays

188. Saturdays stand out among those days dedicated to the Virgin Mary. These are designated as memorials of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This memorial derives from Carolingian time (ninth century), but the reasons for having chosen Saturday for its observance are unknown. While many explanations have been advanced to explain this choice, none is completely satisfactory from the point of view of the history of popular piety.

Prescinding from its historical origins, today the memorial rightly emphasizes certain values “to which contemporary spirituality is more sensitive: it is a remembrance of the maternal example and discipleship of the Blessed Virgin Mary who, strengthened by faith and hope, on that great Saturday on which Our Lord lay in the tomb, was the only one of the disciples to hold vigil in expectation of the Lord’s resurrection; it is a prelude and introduction to the celebration of Sunday, the weekly memorial of the Resurrection of Christ; it is a sign that the “Virgin Mary is continuously present and operative in the life of the Church.”
Popular piety is also sensitive to the Saturday memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The statutes of many religious communities and associations of the faithful prescribe that special devotion be paid to the Holy Mother of God on Saturdays, sometimes through specified pious exercises composed precisely for Saturdays.

Marian months

190. With regard to the observance of “Marian months,” which is widespread in the Latin and Oriental Churches, a number of essential points can be mentioned.

In the West, the practice of observing months dedicated to the Blessed Virgin emerged from a context in which the liturgy was not always regarded as the normative form of Christian worship. This caused, and continues to cause, some difficulties at a liturgico-pastoral level that should be carefully examined.

191. In relation to the western custom of observing a “Marian month” during the month of May (or in November in some parts of the Southern hemisphere), it would seem opportune to take into account the demands of the liturgy, the expectations of the faithful, their maturity in the faith, in an eventual study of the problems deriving from the “Marian months” in the overall pastoral activity of the local Church, as might happen, for example, with any suggestion of abolishing the Marian observances during the month of May.

In many cases, the solution for such problems would seem to lie in harmonizing the content of the “Marian months” with the concomitant season of the liturgical year. For example, since the month of May largely corresponds with the fifty days of Easter, the pious exercises practised at this time could emphasize Our Lady’s participation in the paschal mystery (cf. John 19, 25-27), and the Pentecost event (cf. Acts 1, 14) with which the Church begins: Our Lady journeys with the Church having shared in the novum of the Resurrection, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The fifty days are also a time for the celebration of the sacraments of Christian initiation and of the mystagogy. The pious exercises connected with the month of May could easily highlight the earthly role played by the glorified Queen of Heaven, here and now, in the celebration of the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist.

The directives of Sacrosanctum Concilium on the need to orient the “minds of the faithful ... firstly to the feasts of the Lord, in which, the mysteries of salvation are celebrated during the year,” and with which the Blessed Virgin Mary is certainly associated, should be closely followed.

Opportune catechesis should remind the faithful that the weekly Sunday memorial of the paschal mystery is "the primordial feast day." Bearing in mind that the four weeks of Advent are an example of a Marian time that has been incorporated harmoniously into the liturgical year, the faithful should be assisted in coming to a full appreciation of the numerous references to the Mother of our Saviour during this particular period.

Veneration of the Saints and Beati

Principles

208. The cult of the saints, especially of the martyrs, is an ancient ecclesial phenomenon, that is rooted in the Scriptures (cf. Act 7, 54-60; Acts 6, 9-11; 7, 9-17) and the practice of the Church of the first half of the second century. Both Eastern and Western Churches have always venerated the saints. The Church has strenuously defended and explicitated the theological basis of this cult, especially since the rise of Protestantism and its objections to certain aspects of the traditional veneration of the saints. The connection between the cult of the saints and the doctrine of the Church has also been clearly illustrated. The cultic expressions, both liturgical and devotional, of
the veneration have always be carefully disciplined by the Church, which has always stressed the exemplary testimony to genuine Christian life given by these illustrious disciples of the Lord.

209. When treating of the liturgical year, Sacrosanctum Concilium effectively illustrates this ecclesial reality and the significance of the veneration of the saints and Beati: “The Church has always included in the annual cycle memorial days of the martyrs and other saints. Raised up to perfection by the manifold grace of God and already in possession of eternal salvation, they sing God’s perfect praise in heaven and pray for us. By celebrating their anniversaries, the Church proclaims the achievement of the paschal mystery in the saints who have suffered and who have been glorified with Christ. She proposes them to the faithful as examples who draw all men to the Father through Christ, and through their merits she begs God’s favours.”

210. A correct understanding of the Church’s doctrine on the saints is only possible in the wider context of the articles of faith concerning:

• the “One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church,” Holy because of the presence in the Church of “Jesus Christ who, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, is proclaimed as the “sole Holy One”; because of the incessant action of the Spirit of holiness; and because the Church has been given the necessary means of sanctification. While the Church does have sinners in her midst, she “is endowed already with a sanctity which is real though imperfect”; she is “the Holy People of God,” whose members, according to Scripture, are called “saints” (cf. Acts 9, 13; 1 Cor 6, 1; 16,1).

• the “communion of saints” through which the Church in heaven, the Church awaiting purification “in the state of purgatory,” and the pilgrim Church on earth share “in the same love of God and neighbour.” Indeed, all who are in Christ and possess his Spirit make up a single Church and are united in him.

• the doctrine of the sole mediation of Christ (cf. 1 Tim 2, 3), which does not, however, exclude subordinate mediations, which must always be understood in relation to the all embracing mediation of Christ.

211. The doctrine of the Church and her liturgy propose the saints and Beati who already contemplate in the “clarity of His unity and trinity” to the faithful because they are:

• historical witnesses to the universal vocation to holiness; as eminent fruit of the redemption of Christ, they are a proof and record that God calls his children to the perfection of Christ (cf. Eph 4, 13; Col 1, 28), in all times and among all nations, and from the most varied socio-cultural conditions and states of life;

• illustrious disciples of Christ and therefore models of evangelical life; the church recognises the heroiness of their virtues in the canonization process and recommends them as models for the faithful;

• citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem who ceaselessly sing the glory and mercy of God; the Paschal passage from this world to the Father has already been accomplished in them;

• intercessors and friends of the faithful who are still on the earthly pilgrimage, because the saints, already enraptured by the happiness of God, know the needs of their brothers and sisters and accompany them on their pilgrim journey with their prayers and protection;

• patrons of the local churches, of which they were founders (St. Eusebius of Vercelli) or illustrious pastors (St. Ambrose of Milan); patrons of nations: apostles of their conversion to the Christian faith (St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew in India) or expressions of national identity (St. Patrick in the case of Ireland); of corporations and professions (St. Omobono for tailors); in particular circumstances—in childbirth (St. Anne, St. Raimondo...
Nonato), in death (St. Joseph)—or to obtain specific graces (St. Lucy for the recovery of eyesight) etc.

In thanksgiving to God the Father, the Church professes all this when she proclaims, “You give us an example to follow in the lives of your saints, assistance by their intercession, and a bond of fraternal love in the communion of grace.”

212. The ultimate object of veneration of the saints is the glory of God and the sanctification of man by conforming one’s life fully to the divine will and by imitating the virtue of those who were preeminent disciples of the Lord.

Catechesis and other forms of doctrinal instruction should therefore make known to the faithful that: our relationship with the saints must be seen in the light of the faith and should not obscure the “cultus latiae due to God the Father through Christ in the Holy Spirit, but intensify it”; “true cult of the saints consists not so much in the multiplication of external acts but in intensification of active charity,” which translates into commitment to the Christian life.

Holy Angels

213. With the clear and sober language of catechesis, the Church teaches that “the existence of the spiritual, non-corporeal beings that Sacred Scripture usually calls ‘angels’ is a truth of faith. The witness of Scripture is as clear as the unanimity of Tradition.”

Tradition regards the angels as messengers of God, “potent executives of his commands, and ready at the sound of his words” (Ps 103, 20. They serve his salvific plan, and are “sent to serve those who will inherit salvation” (Hb 1, 14).

Devotion to the holy angels gives rise to a certain form of the Christian life which is characterized by:

- devout gratitude to God for having placed these heavenly spirits of great sanctity and dignity at the service of man;
- an attitude of devotion deriving from the knowledge of living constantly in the presence of the holy angels of God;
- serenity and confidence in facing difficult situations, since the Lord guides and protects the faithful in the way of justice through the ministry of His Holy Angels. Among the prayers to the Guardian Angels the Angele Dei is especially popular, and is often recited by families at morning and evening prayers, or at the recitation of the Angelus.

217. Popular devotion to the Holy Angels, which is legitimate and good, can, however, also give rise to possible deviations:

- when, as sometimes can happen, the faithful are taken by the idea that the world is subject to demiurgical struggles, or an incessant battle between good and evil spirits, or angels and daemons, in which man is left at the mercy of superior forces and over which he is helpless; such cosmologies bear little relation to the true Gospel vision of the struggle to overcome the devil, which requires moral commitment, a fundamental option for the Gospel, humility and prayer;
- when the daily events of life, which have nothing or little to do with our progressive maturing on the journey towards Christ are read schematically or simplistically, indeed childishly, so as to ascribe all setbacks to the devil and all success to the guardian angels. The practice of assigning names to the Holy Angels should be discouraged, except in the cases of Gabriel, Raphael and Michael whose names are contained in Holy Scripture.

Shrines and Pilgrimages

261. The relationship between the liturgy and popular piety is probably most evident at shrines. These are often dedicated
Excerpts from the Directory on Popular Piety and Devotions

to the Holy Trinity, to Christ our Saviour, to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to the Saints or Beati. "At shrines more abundant means of salvation are to be provided for the faithful; the word of God is to be carefully proclaimed; liturgical life is to be appropriately fostered especially through the celebration of the Eucharist and penance; and approved forms of popular piety are to be fostered."

The Shrine

Principles

262. In accordance with Christian revelation, the risen Christ is the supreme and definitive sanctuary (cf. John 2, 18-21; Acts 21, 22) around which the community of the disciples gathers. In turn, that community is the new dwelling place of the Lord (cf. 1 Pet 2, 5; Eph 2, 19-22).

Theologically, a shrine, which often derives from popular piety, is a sign of the active and saving presence of the Lord in history, and a place of respite in which the People of God on its journey to the heavenly city (cf. Heb 13, 14), can renew its strength for the pilgrim journey.

263. Shrines, like churches, have enormous symbolic value: they are icons "of the dwelling place of God among men" (Apoc 21,3) and allude to "the mystery of the Temple" which was fulfilled in the Body of Christ (cf. John 1, 14; 2, 21), in the ecclesial community (cf. 1 Pet 2, 5) of the faithful (cf. 1 Cor 3, 16-17; 6, 19; 2 Cor 6, 16).

Canonical Recognition

264. "The term shrine signifies a church or other sacred place to which the faithful make pilgrimages for a particular pious reason with the approval of the local ordinary."

A prior condition for the canonical recognition of a diocesan, national or international shrine is the respective approval of the diocesan bishop, the Conference of Bishops, or the Holy See. Canonical approval is an official recognition of a sacred place and for the specific purpose of receiving the pilgrimages of the People of God which go there to worship the Father, profess the faith, and to be reconciled with God, the Church and one's neighbour, and to implore the intercession of the Mother of God or one of the saints.

It should not be overlooked, however, that many other places, often humble little churches in the cities or in the countryside, locally fulfill the same functions as shrines, even without canonical recognition. These also form part of the "topography" of the faith and of the popular piety of the people of God, of a particular community living in a specific geographical area, on its journey towards the heavenly Jerusalem in faith (Acts 21).

Pilgrimage

279. Pilgrimage is a universal religious experience and a typical expression of popular piety. It is invariably connected with a shrine, for which it is an indispensable component. Pilgrims need shrines, and shrines need pilgrims.

Spirituality of Pilgrimage

286. Despite change, pilgrimage has maintained the essential traits of its spirituality throughout the ages, down to our own time.

Eschatological dimension. The original and essential quality of pilgrimage: a pilgrimage, or "journey to a shrine," is both a moment in and parable of, our journey towards the Kingdom; it affords an opportunity for the Christian to take greater stock of his eschatological destiny as homo viator: journeying between the obscurity of the faith and the thirst for the vision of clarity, tribulation and the desire for everlasting life, the weariness of the journey and the rest awaiting, between exile and homeland, between frenetic activity and contemplation.

The exodus event, Israel's journey towards the promised land, is also reflected in the spirituality of pilgrimage: the pilgrim is well aware that "there is no eternal city for us in this life" (Heb 14, 14), and that beyond the immediate objective of a
particular shrine and across the desert of life, we find our true promised land, in heaven.

_Penitential dimension._ Pilgrimage is also a journey of conversion: in journeying towards a shrine the pilgrim moves from a realisation of his own sinfulness and of his attachment to ephemeral and unnecessary things to interior freedom and an understanding of the deeper meaning of life. As has already been said, a visit to a shrine can be a propitious occasion for the faithful and is often undertaken in order to avail of the sacrament of Penance. In the past—as in our own times—pilgrimage itself has been seen as a penitential act.

When the pilgrim returns from a genuine pilgrimage, he does so with the intention of “amending his life,” and ordering it more closely to God, and to live in a more transcendent way.

_Festive dimension._ The penitential aspect of pilgrimage is complemented by a festive aspect: the festive dimension also lies at the heart of pilgrimage, and arises from many anthropological reasons.

The joy of a Christian pilgrimage is a continuation of the joy experienced on Israel's pious pilgrimage to Jerusalem: “I rejoiced when I heard them say: 'let us go up to God's house’” (Ps 122, 1); pilgrimage can be a break from the monotony of daily routine; it can be an alleviation of the burdens of every day life, especially for the poor whose lot is heavy; it is an occasion to give expression to Christian fraternity, in moments of friendship meeting each other, and spontaneity which can sometimes be repressed.

_Worship dimension._ Pilgrimage is essentially an act of worship: a pilgrim goes to a shrine to encounter God, to be in His presence, and to offer Him adoration in worship, and to open his heart to Him.

During his visit to the shrine, the pilgrim completes many acts of worship which are properly liturgical or drawn from popular piety. He performs different kinds of prayers: prayers of praise and adoration to the Lord for his goodness and holiness; prayers of thanksgiving for the gifts he has given; prayers in discharge of a vow; prayers imploring the graces necessary in life; prayers asking for forgiveness of sins committed.

Frequently, the pilgrim's prayers are directed to Our Lady, or to the angels and saints who are regarded as powerful intercessors with God. The icons venerated at pilgrim shrines are signs of the presence of the Mother of God and the saints who surround the Lord in his glory, “living for ever to intercede for us” (Heb 7, 25), and always present in the community gathered in his name (cf Matt 18, 20; 28, 20).

Sacred images, whether of Christ, his Mother, the angels and saints, are signs of the divine presence and of God's provident love; they bear witness to the prayers of generations raised up to God in supplication, to the sighs of the afflicted, and to the thankful joy of those who have received grace and mercy.

_Apostolic dimension._ The pilgrim’s journey, in a certain sense, recalls the journey of Christ and his disciples as they travelled throughout Palestine to announce the Gospel of salvation. In this perspective, pilgrimage is a proclaimed faith in which pilgrims become “errant heralds of Christ.”
Eucharistic Adoration and Missio

Joyce Ann Zimmerman

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Perpetual eucharistic adoration is gaining momentum in our dioceses and parishes, and this is surely cause for rejoicing. In spite of some reports that not all Catholics believe in the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, the phenomenon of eucharistic adoration is concretely and practically challenging this unproven opinion. At the same time that growth in eucharistic adoration is a positive sign of a desire for a deepening relationship with Christ, we must also raise a caution. Eucharistic adoration is not always grounded in a solid eucharistic theology consistent with the vision of Vatican II, nor is adoration always in keeping with a balanced relationship between liturgical and devotional prayer. But we surely say that eucharistic adoration is a felicitous movement when it draws us deeper into Christ, witnesses to our belief in his real presence, and leads us to and from the Mass where Christ becomes present in the Blessed Sacrament.

Because eucharistic adoration is so closely associated with the Lord's Supper, sacrament, and Mass, it is right that the Church is very careful about its practice and deliberately regulates it. It is also right that all adoration (precisely as devotional practice) flows to and from liturgical celebrations. This means that eucharistic adoration derives its inspiration and motivation from the celebration of the eucharistic mystery itself. Moreover, since every Mass concludes with a missio, that is a sending forth to live the mystery just celebrated, we propose that eucharistic adoration itself cannot be removed from missio.

On the surface, this might seem like a startling statement to some, and even a contradiction. If eucharistic adoration is a personal devotion that an individual freely chooses, then why would it necessarily be connected to mission? The answer to this question lies exactly in its relationship to Mass itself. Worship is always a communal act, an act of the Church, an act of the body of Christ united to its Head. As such, then, neither Mass nor adoration can be disconnected from Christ and his mystery. First of all, then, adoration draws the adorer "into an ever deeper share in the paschal mystery and lead [him or her] to respond gratefully to the gift of him who through his humanity constantly pours divine life into the

2 See Sacrosanum Concilium (The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy) no. 13; hereafter, SC.
3 Directory, no. 164.

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members of his Body.” But this close relationship with Christ and his mystery would also draw the adorer more closely into the salvific work of Christ. Here, “faith in the Lord’s real presence has as its natural consequence the outward and public manifestation of that belief.”

Beyond intimate friendship with Christ, prayer for self and others, surrendering of lives to God, and an increase of faith, hope and charity, one can make a strong case that eucharistic adoration also leads to missio just as Mass does. This is the thesis of this article.

We must consider three areas in more detail before we can articulate at the conclusion of this article a theology and sound pastoral practice of eucharistic adoration leading to missio; the paschal mystery (the heart of liturgy and that which liturgy makes present), presence (grounded in adoration centering on God), and the relation of adoration to the eucharistic celebration (whose internal dynamic always takes the assembly to missio).

The Paschal Mystery

The fundamental theology of liturgy repeated over and over again in the Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy is that liturgy first and foremost enacts in the here and now the dying and rising mystery of Jesus and that we are to be full, conscious and active participants in this mystery by right of our baptism. If liturgy enacts the paschal mystery in its very structure, then one aspect of participation is to discover in the celebration itself how this dynamic rhythm is present to us in this particular liturgy for our engagement (and it won’t always be in the same way). Perhaps the dying might be to surrender personal preferences about music in the liturgy or the choice to actually sing so that we might experience the rising of an exuberant sung praise. Or the dying might be to put aside the distraction of an altercation we recently had with someone and enter more fully into the liturgical prayer with fewer distractions so that the rising of reconciliation can well up. When we begin to be aware of what’s happening to us during the celebration, it is amazing how many different ways the dying and rising shows its face.

One work of caution here: dying and rising is not a linear experience. It is not matter of saying, “OK, Lord, I’ve done some dying, now bring on the joy of rising to new life.” What we do know from Jesus himself is that dying always leads to rising. The habit of the discipline of self-sacrifice we develop always brings us closer to the loving embrace of God, always increases in us God’s divine life.

As we engage ourselves and become more aware of the dying and rising in the liturgy itself, we are more equipped to recognize the dying and rising rhythm in our own everyday life. As our awareness of this continues to grow ever deeper, we also become aware that the rhythm of liturgy is identical to the rhythm of our daily Christian living. In a sense liturgy is a practice in recognizing our baptismal dying and rising mystery so that as we live the “messiness” of our everyday lives we are more equipped to recognize Christ’s mystery at work in us.

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4 Directory, no. 164.
5 These are the benefits of eucharistic adoration mentioned in no. 164 of the Directory.
6 See also question 12, “How do popular devotions relate to our responsibilities toward others in our world?” in the U.S. bishops’ recent statement, “Popular Devotional Practices: Basic Questions and Answers” (USCCB, November 12, 2003). Here the bishops link missio to the social dimension of the gospel; since the rite of exposition includes a Liturgy of the Word, this social dimension of the gospel would be explicit when a gospel proclamation is chosen fro the proclamation of the word.
7 I use “dying and rising” as a shorthand metaphor for paschal mystery, but clearly this mystery means more than just cross and resurrection. It also includes Jesus’ incarnation, life and mission, death, resurrection ascension, and sending of the Spirit.
8 See especially SC nos. 2, 5, 6, 14, 102, 104, 106.
It is our right to demand that our eucharistic celebrations be so authentic and well celebrated that they clearly issue forth the prophetic challenge to die to self because without this death we cannot enter into the transforming new life that is the grace of liturgy. We can't have life without embracing death. We can't grow in our loving relationship with God without dying to self. This is the very essence/meaning of the paschal mystery. Only thus transformed from death to life by liturgy can we undertake authentic mission, for liturgy dismisses us to go forth to live the dying and rising rhythm of Christ's mystery; indeed, liturgy dismisses us to go forth and be Christ in our fractured world.

The relation between ministry and adoration is precisely that relation between dying and rising. In ministry we spend ourselves for the sake of others. Hence, our very Christian living cannot be without demands and self-sacrifice. At the same time we are called to die to self, in adoration we lovingly unite ourselves with Christ in the peace and silence of adoration and are restored in body and spirit to new life. Dying and rising! In other words, the dynamic relationship of ministry and adoration is simply one other way to express the paschal mystery in our Christian living. Without this ministry counterpart adoration risks becoming a "feel good," entirely personal experience that is actually the exact opposite of self-giving. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (which includes the mystery of Jesus' own self-giving—at the incarnation, through his public ministry, on the cross, in Eucharist) calls for meditation on Jesus' self-giving that leads to our own greater commitment to self-giving. Adoration leads to ministry, to care and concern for others. Christ's paschal mystery (into which each of us is baptized) both models and demands this self-giving.

Presence

The Church has a long history of encountering Christ under differing modes of presence—in the Church in general in various ways (for example, when the church teaches) but especially in liturgical celebrations: in the person of the presiding priest, "but especially in the eucharistic species" of bread and wine, in the word proclaimed, and in the assembly. The two uses of "especially" are significant here and can be understood as pointing to the basis or starting point for a consideration of Christ's presence with respect to eucharistic adoration.

By singling out liturgical celebrations in their comments on Christ's presence, the Council Fathers underscored these rites to be what we might call "privileged moments" for encountering Christ in the dying and rising rhythm of the paschal mystery. Liturgy is the enactment of Christ's paschal mystery in the here and now (as we said above in the section on paschal mystery) and our full, conscious, and active participation in this mystery is the way we reinforce our Christian identity as Christ's body and our mission to be faithful disciples through gospel living. Furthermore, the importance of Christ's presence in the eucharistic species cannot be emphasized enough because this consecrated bread and wine is our messianic food; we eat and drink and in that action-response to Christ's gift of self we become ourselves the very presence of the risen Christ for others. In liturgy and at Communion we encounter the Christ we are and are becoming. This very encounter draws us into the mystery, but more: it draws us into the life of Christ so that we might live and do as Christ.

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9 See Rom 6:3—11.
11 SC, no. 7, italics added.
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament presupposes belief in the real presence of Christ. However, this belief must rest on more than philosophical/theological/doctrinal explanations (that is, transubstantiation). Belief in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist is primarily a matter of faith arising from profound encounters with this mystery in all its awe and wonder. So, a first point to make about Christ’s presence is that eucharistic adoration is a public witness to belief that Christ’s risen presence is here among us in this sacrament. To assert this point is to imply much more.

The Blessed Sacrament isn’t the presence of Christ’s historical, humanly enfleshed body; it is the presence of Christ’s risen body. This distinction is important not just to allay some of the accusations even now still being heard occasionally about eucharistic practice (for example, we Catholics are cannibals because we eat human flesh and drink human blood), but the distinction takes us to the heart of the mystery: the Eucharist is a sacrament of resurrection that cannot be separated from eschatology.12

Specifically, eucharistic adoration immerses us in Christ the resurrected One and draws us beyond this life to union with the glorious Christ who now sits at God’s right hand and reigns eternally. When we keep this resurrection, eschatological perspective at the forefront, we are better able to grasp that eucharistic adoration is a reminder (to ourselves and others) that this life isn’t all there is. At the same time we already share in resurrected life and the eternal glory it promises (through Communion and adoration), we still long for our participation in its consummation in the fullness of time. The “already-not yet” of resurrection/eschatology and ministry parallels the “already-not yet” of the rising and dying of the paschal mystery. We Christians live with feet planted deeply in this world at the same time that we already share in the promises of everlasting life. To be drawn into the bliss of the “already” is actually challenge to live the “not yet” in lieu of this final fulfillment. We cannot separate life from death, already from not yet, resurrection/eschatology from the demands of gospel living in the here and now. Thus both Communion and adoration (resurrection/eschatological moments) include an inherent claim on our lives; we are moved to live in our world in such a way as to hasten the establishment of God’s reign, the Second Coming of Christ, and the fullness of time. All gospel ministry, then, has an eschatological bent at the same time that Communion and adoration postulate the gospel ministry of care and concern for others.13 The complete mystery is actually visible in both Communion/adoration and ministry at the same time that Communion/adoration focuses us on resurrection/eschatology, and ministry on the dying of self-giving.

For this reason eucharistic adoration is always a sign of hope to the world and hope for a better world. Adoration is one way to announce gospel value priorities and that these evangelical values will ultimately be victorious as well as one way to challenge the world in its foibles and sinfulness. The ministry that flows from eucharistic participation and adoration always has this eschatological thrust—our concern and care for others is an announcement that God’s reign will triumph and that God’s goodness and generous gifts to us ultimately lead those who are faithful to God’s will to everlasting adoration before the triumphant Lamb who was slain and who now reigns victoriously at God’s right hand.

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12 Eschatology is the science of the end times that will be ushered in by Christ’s Second Coming when some will be gathered back to God to share in eternal glory and others will be banished to eternal punishment (see Matt 25).

13 This is a point rarely developed when discussing Christian ministry, but is an important one that broadens our notion of ministry beyond simply doing good to being good for the sake of establishing God’s reign.
This discussion about resurrection and eschatology leads to a second point about Christ's risen presence in the Blessed Sacrament: Eucharistic adoration challenges us to carry over our belief in Christ's risen presence in the Blessed Sacrament to practical respect for the dignity of all others because they are members of the body of Christ. Each time we respond at Communion with our "Amen" to "Body of Christ," we are really saying two things: this consecrated host is the body of Christ and we baptized people are members of the body of Christ. When we use the language "body of Christ" to refer to the Blessed Sacrament as well as to the baptized, we are not using two different phrases to mean two different things. We are using the same phrase to refer to two different modes of presence of the one and same Christ. Our belief in one mode of presence embraces and builds up our belief in other modes of Christ's presence.

Pastorally speaking, however, the real challenge here is to recover our baptismal dignity as the body of Christ. Even this many years after the Council many people find this a strange way to think—that they themselves are members of the body of Christ and can be a real presence of the risen Christ for others in their everyday gospel living.

The Eastern Church expresses this double mode of Christ's presence in the body of Christ quite explicitly in what we call a "double epiclesis" (an epiclesis calls down the Holy Spirit in blessing). In Eastern anaphoras (eucharistic prayers) the presider calls down the Holy Spirit on both the gifts and the people. In the words of the fourth-century bishop Theodore of Mopsuestia:

The bishop (presider) must ask and beseech God that the Holy Spirit should come, and that grace should come thence upon the bread and wine offered, that they may be known to be truly the body and blood of our Lord, the memorial of immortality.

He prays that the grace of the Holy Spirit may come upon all gathered together, that they may be united as into one body by partaking of the one body our Lord ... 14

What we easily miss in our own Western Liturgy's eucharistic prayers is that God transforms both the gifts and ourselves into the body of Christ in relation to all other members of this risen body.

The issue that eucharistic adoration raises is that we believe ourselves and others to be the body of Christ just as really—albeit under a different mode—as the Blessed Sacrament is the body of Christ. Adoration leads us to accept and act on the fact that God's gift of nourishment and new life in Communion and the contemplation of this mystery in adoration is for the sake of others because it is the same mystery of presence in that all are members of the same body. Here, again, we locate Christian ministry within the mystery we adore—whatever we do for the sake of furthering God's reign and nurturing God's people is but a practical and active expression of our contemplative absorption in Christ's sacramental presence, On the one hand, Christ is present to us in the mutual loving embrace of his risen, sacramental presence in the Blessed Sacrament both as heavenly food and as adored. On the other hand we are that risen, sacramental presence of Christ for all those we love and for whom we care, those who also are the body of Christ.

Authentic and fruitful adoration of Christ's presence in the Blessed Sacrament should come, and that grace should come thence upon the bread and wine offered, that they may be known to be truly the body and blood of our Lord, the memorial of immortality.

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14 See R.C.D. Jasper and G.J. Cuming, trans. and eds., Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1987) 136. Our Eucharistic Prayer IV has a similar double epiclesis, although it is "split"—the epiclesis over the gifts comes before the institution narrative with the epiclesis over the people coming after. When the epiclesis is thus split it carries home less clearly that as the gifts of bread and wine are changed into the risen Lord's body and blood, so are the people so changed.
and in us necessarily leads to concern for and care for others. Joyful, life-giving adoration must produce fruit by our dying to ourselves for the sake of others. Dying and rising—the paschal mystery.

We move to a third issue for consideration, the relation of adoration to eucharistic celebration, before we can finally articulate a theology and sound pastoral practice of eucharistic adoration leading to missio.

Relation of Adoration to Eucharistic Celebration

Adoration proclaims our belief in the unique presence of the risen Christ in the eucharistic species of bread and wine and is a sign of our communion with our Lord as well as with each other. Adoration is a response of awe and worship to that presence and union. Adoration begins in and always leads us back to the eucharistic celebration, but with much more force and implication than the fact that it is at Mass that the bread and wine are confected. We look to the eucharistic celebration itself as a guide for understanding how adoration and eucharistic celebration are so intimately related in all aspects.

We begin by noting that adoration has always been included in the celebration of Mass itself, even to now. After the elevations of the host and chalice the presider genuflects each time in adoration. After Communion we spend time in worshipful prayer. Once a year the liturgy itself prescribes an extended period of adoration—that is, on Holy Thursday evening at the end of the Mass of the Lord’s Supper. Adoration, then, already begins during Mass; continuation of eucharistic adoration outside of Mass is just that—a continuation of what is already done during Mass. First of all, then, eucharistic adoration and celebration are linked because one (adoration) is a constituent part of the other (celebration of Christ’s presence).

Second, adoration and celebration are linked because, as Pope John Paul II remarks in his recent encyclical on the Eucharist, the Blessed Sacrament we adore is a sacred species consecrated by the prayer of the Church during a eucharist celebration and directs us toward communion. The Holy Communion we receive during Mass and the contemplative communion with the Blessed Sacrament during adoration both have the same end—prolonged unity with Christ and with each member of his body. The Holy Father also reminds us that adoration prolongs and increases the fruits of our communion in the body and blood of the Lord.

These remarks are fairly obvious and don’t say anything new, but are an important foundation for any other development of the relationship between adoration and eucharistic celebration. Now, however, we wish to move our discussion in a different direction. As we mentioned above, the pope explicitly states in his encyclical on Eucharist that the Blessed Sacrament we adore originates in a eucharistic celebration. We might propose, then, that the dynamics of the eucharistic celebration itself are a necessary constituent of eucharistic adoration. There are, in fact, two interconnected eucharistic dynamics we might fruitfully pursue: the dying and rising of the paschal mystery (which we introduced in the first section above) and the fourfold action of Jesus both at the

15 The substance of these reflections on relating the fourfold action of Eucharist to adoration were first developed to be delivered as a major presentation for the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration of LaCrosse, Wisconsin, on August 2, 2003, on the occasion of their celebration of 125 years of perpetual adoration.
16 If the assembly’s posture during the eucharistic prayer is standing, the people also bow in adoration while the presider genuflects; see GIRM (the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 2002) no. 43, U.S. pastoral adaptation.
17 See GIRM no. 88.
18 The April 17, 2003, Holy Thursday encyclical letter Ecclesia de Eucharistia, no. 25.
19 Ecclesia de Eucharistia, no. 25.
multiplication of loaves (see Luke 9:16 and parallels) and at the Last supper (see Luke 22:9). We begin with the latter dynamic and then return to the former one.

Take, bless, break, give. At the multiplication of loaves Jesus took bread, blessed, it broke it, and gave it to his disciples; at the Last Supper Jesus performed this same fourfold action over the bread as well as over the cup of wine. The actions over the bread and cup shape our full, conscious, and active participation in Eucharist and how we are to live the missio to which this fourfold action leads. The presider takes up the bread and wine; as Jesus offers himself on the altar so do we place ourselves on the altar and surrender ourselves in self-offering. The presider blesses the bread and wine in consecration; as they are transformed through God's action into the very body and blood of Christ, so also are we transformed into being more perfect members of the body of Christ. The presider breaks the bread and pours out the wine so that all might share in God's nourishment; as the one loaf and one cup are broken and poured out for the sake of all, similarly do we “break” out of our own small world and relate to others in such a way that we become “more than ourselves” by uniting with—becoming part of—others in love. The presider gives the gifts to the assembly; as the consecrated bread and wine are given to us in Holy Communion for our nourishment, so do we give ourselves in mission and ministry for the care and benefit and strengthening of others.

A similar fourfold action takes place during adoration. Only by offering ourselves on the altar during liturgy—by surrendering ourselves to God's action within us—can we be transformed into ever more perfect members of Christ's body; similarly, during adoration we surrender ourselves to Christ's loving presence, giving ourselves over to him in trust and hope, prayer and worship. During liturgy the bread and wine as well as ourselves are transformed into Christ's body and blood, into being more perfect members of Christ's body; similarly, during adoration we are transformed by an intense union with Christ through mutual presence such that Christ and we are intimately entwined in life and destiny. As the one loaf is broken and wine poured out so that many might be nourished and strengthened by it, so during adoration our absorption in the all-loving presence of Christ draws us out of ourselves to become more than we are by uniting ourselves more fully with Christ and others. Finally, as the bread and wine are given for the sake of the world, so during adoration do we give ourselves over to Christ in intimate union and in this very identification with him do we, then, also accept as our missio his own salvific mission for the sake of others.

To make these dynamics clear, we might schematize them as shown in the box below. Several implications become clear when we ponder this dynamic. First, to repeat, both liturgy and adoration go to missio. Second, we might notice here a reciprocal relationship between take and bless (between self-giving/surrender and

| liturgy: | TAKE self-offering on altar with Christ | BLESS transformation into Christ | BREAK become more than ourselves | GIVE missio for the sake of others |
| adoration: | surrender to Christ's loving presence | transformation by intense union with Christ | absorption into Christ to become bigger than ourselves | identity with Christ means taking up his mission |

20 This fourfold dynamic of take, bless, break, and give is how GIRM introduces and explains the structural elements of the Liturgy of the Eucharist; see GIRM no. 72.
transformation into someone new) and between break and give (between becoming more than ourselves in order to be Christ's risen presence for others). Third, if we are faithful to each element of the fourfold dynamic, God always brings us to bear good fruit. Fourth, there is a marvelous cooperation between divinity and humanity in this fourfold action of both Eucharist and adoration.

In both liturgy and adoration the act of self-giving/surrender leads to transformation and missio. Thus the very dynamic of the fourfold eucharistic action precludes any turning in on ourselves in exclusive personal devotion, but always moves us beyond devotion outside of ourselves to be in a new and deeper relation with Christ and others.

**Paschal mystery.** The paschal mystery is about self-offering, and through that offering resurrection life bursts forth. What happens in Eucharist is the same mystery that happened during Jesus' life: he offers himself to the Father in obedience and self-sacrificing love for humanity. Jesus Christ gave himself on the altar of the cross, and he gives himself on the altar of the Eucharist. Our share in Communion is a divine-human union that both nourishes us and brings forth in us a more intense share in divine life. During adoration once again Christ gives himself to us in self-offering, this time under the mode of intimate presence, which also leads to divine-human union. Incarnated in the Blessed Sacrament, this offer of mutual union of intimate presence becomes an incarnation in us when we give ourselves over in self-offering to that union of presences. Adoration, then, requires of us self-offering (giving ourselves over to Christ's presence in the Blessed Sacrament) at the same time that it makes available the fruit of our self-offering—intimate union with God and the new life which that union brings. In this sense adoration itself is an expression of the paschal mystery for it entails both self-offering and new life, both dying and rising.

Whether we approach Eucharist and adoration from the fourfold dynamic of take, bless, break, and give or the paschal mystery dynamic of dying and rising, the same end result happens: union with Christ that only happens through self-offering, which in turn brings new life and identifies us with Christ and his salvific mission. In both cases this presence, union, and new life are not only for our own sake but also for the sake of building up the body, Christ's Church. In our world today we are the self-offering that Christ uses to continue his saving actions. Adoration is more than worship; it is identifying ourselves so closely with Christ that his mystery becomes our mystery, his self-offering becomes our own self-offering, his life becomes our own life, his mission becomes our own mission. Adoration is dying to self, giving ourselves over to Christ's presence. By so doing we are united with him in life and mission.

**Toward a Theology of Eucharist Adoration and Missio**

Several points follow from our first three sections on paschal mystery, presence, and the relationship of eucharistic celebration and adoration, and serve to point us toward a theology of eucharistic adoration and missio.

First, our discussion so far impresses on us that adoration is not only a privilege but a necessity if the riches of eucharistic celebration are to be realized. True, not everyone in the body of Christ is given the time and commitment to make adoration so explicitly a part of daily life as some are privileged to share. Sometimes such practical problems as locked churches (unfortunately, a necessity in our society in many locales) keep us from adoration of the Blessed Sacrament even if we can find the time in our busy schedules. For some this privilege is more readily available in parish churches or in the chapels of universities or religious congregations. But even if this more extended and formal eucharistic adoration is not a regular part
of daily life, everyone can share at least briefly in the gift that adoration is during the time that liturgy itself provides for our adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Both opportunities for eucharistic adoration (that is, within and outside Mass) not only witness to our belief in the real presence but they also challenge us to embrace the paschal mystery and bring Christ's presence to all we meet in our daily lives. One practical consequence, then, is that we ought not let the two special moments of adoration that occur during Mass (at the elevations and in the silence after Communion) pass by without our full attention and devotion.

Second, adoration has its source and summit in eucharistic celebration. Neglect in linking eucharistic adoration directly to the action of Eucharist runs the risk of its becoming a privatized (and perhaps even self-centered) devotion devoid of ecclesial meaning or mission. Adoration flows from Mass (where the bread was consecrated to be Body), and adoration increases our desire to celebrate Eucharist.

Third, eucharistic adoration is a witness to the adoration of the whole Church in the ceaseless celebration of the one Eucharist at all times and everywhere on earth as in heaven. As such, those who spend time in eucharistic adoration embody the hope of the Church, for they witness to the journey in which we all share to join all the angels and saints in heaven in eternal praise of God, even as we now join them in our eucharistic celebrations. Both eucharistic celebration and adoration are a foretaste of heaven.

Fourth, the unity and solidarity we share as the body of Christ is directly linked to the gift of Self that Christ offers to us in celebrating Eucharist. Adoration helps us appreciate more clearly this link and opens us to Christ's presence in ever new ways. Adoration also challenges us to develop ever deeper respect for the dignity of all members of the body of Christ (and those non-Christians who are not members but are nonetheless the beloved of God) and to be genuinely disturbed by an unjustified violence done to others.

Fifth, the internal dynamic of adoration—communion with Christ, opening/emptying of ourselves, becoming larger than ourselves, spending ourselves for the sake of others—is the same internal dynamic that unfolds in the eucharistic celebration. This is one more reason why adoration can never be separated from the eucharistic action itself.

Sixth, as with liturgy itself, one measure of the depth of our adoration is whether we are becoming more loving, kind, just, and forgiving in our daily living. Adoration, then, has practical consequences: we cannot adore Christ in the Blessed Sacrament and then not be changed persons who act differently toward others. Those committed to eucharistic adoration ought to be the leaders in embracing change—not change for change's sake, but change that enables us to become who God made us in God's image to be.

Seventh, and finally, adoration helps us appreciate ever more deeply the gift of Christ to us that Eucharist is. It also provides the measure of our lives—as Christ is, so must we be. This is no small demand on us! By ourselves we could be discouraged. But we are not alone. Adoration heightens our union with Christ, which in turn assures and strengthens us to shine forth as Christ's risen presence in our broken world and enables us to respond to God's grace within as we seek to change our world. Adoration never leaves us the same, nor does it leave our world the same.

Adoration is an act of worship of our loving God who gives Self to humanity in the most intimate of ways—as food to eat and drink, as divine Self broken and poured out for us, and loving divine presence. Because God gives, adoration is for us a profound act of our receiving this God who gives. Our very receiving involves a surrender of ourselves, emptying and opening ourselves for this God who gives.
Adoration invites us to come to God empty, with nothing but ourselves. Herein is the missio: adoration is not only communion with God but also a union in solidarity with all among us who are empty and desire to be filled—be that spiritual emptiness and longing, material want and hunger and thirst, emotional imbalance and desire for wholeness and peace. Before our loving and present God, we share the most profound solidarity with the poor and needy—sheer emptiness waiting to be filled.

Adoration is an act that profoundly links us with all those in need because in our own emptiness before God we realize that all we have and are is pure, undeserved gift. In the final analysis adoration brings us to missio as we realize that when we are in God’s presence nothing else in life really matters except emptying ourselves so God can fill. This emptying begins at liturgy and adoration but comes to fulfillment only when our lives are turned toward others. The very emptying reminds us that we are creatures in need and God fills. As God fills us, we have both the strength and grace to reach out to others for their sake.

Adoration, then, helps us put into perspective our wants and desires and strengthens us to embrace priorities that have others first because that is God’s way. Adoration strengthens us to remember that all our actions in this life are nothing less than steps toward our final fulfillment in eternal life when we need nothing else but God. Our intimate but fleeting union with God in this life is finally a glorious and eternal union with the Divine Majesty who chose to love us and be present to us all the days of life here and hereafter. And for that may God ever be adored and praised! 

Eucharistic Adoration and Missio

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# Finding Your Place in the Lectionary

In 2004-2005, no Sundays are replaced by feasts or solemnities

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<td>Holy Family</td>
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<td><strong>Sundays</strong></td>
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<td>Epiphany</td>
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<td>90</td>
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<td>Baptism</td>
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<td>Jan. 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Jan. 30</td>
<td>464</td>
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<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Feb. 6</td>
<td>467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>not celebrated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>not celebrated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>not celebrated</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>not celebrated</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ash Wednesday</td>
<td>Feb. 9</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st in Lent</td>
<td>Feb. 13</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Feb. 20</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Feb. 27</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Mar. 6</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Mar. 13</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palm/Passion</td>
<td>Mar. 20</td>
<td>140</td>
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Easter Triduum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mass of the Lord's Supper</td>
<td>Mar. 24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Celebration of the Lord's Passion</td>
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4th Apr. 17 314
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23rd Sept. 4 524
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30th Oct. 23 546
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34th (Christ the King) Nov. 20 560

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SEASONAL NOTES
The Easter Vigil: When Will It Be Dark Enough?

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

Readers are advised to use the hour given for the centre nearest to their own situation. Readers in the far north are invited to suggest other more relevant centres if those listed below prove unhelpful. Information for northern centres can be provided in a future issue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Toronto</th>
<th>Montreal</th>
<th>Halifax</th>
<th>St. John’s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 26, 2005</td>
<td>7:44</td>
<td>7:24</td>
<td>7:43</td>
<td>7:35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 15, 2006</td>
<td>9:11</td>
<td>8:54</td>
<td>9:11</td>
<td>9:08</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 7, 2007</td>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>8:41</td>
<td>8:59</td>
<td>8:54</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 22, 2008</td>
<td>7:39</td>
<td>7:19</td>
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<td>April 11, 2009</td>
<td>9:06</td>
<td>8:48</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Times for the coming year appear in bold. In shaded years the Triduum begins before the community has moved to Daylight Saving Time.)
MUSIC FOR THE SUNDAY ASSEMBLY

Year A: Lent – Triduum – Easter Season

(February 9 – May 15)

The following suggestions for music in the liturgy for Lent, the Triduum, and the Easter season are from Catholic Book of Worship III, Canada's official hymnal for the English sector. Those who use other hymnals are advised to look at the titles and themes of the selections suggested and choose music with similar themes from their own repertoire.

Some pastoral notes

1. The assembly's singing always has the priority, since this is their sung prayer, and those who are responsible for leadership need to keep the people's right to sing at the forefront when they make their choices. Since an assembly is more likely to sing what is familiar to them, it is best to include only one new song or acclamation in a given liturgy, and perhaps only one during a given season, such as Lent or Easter. Thus it takes long-term planning to build a suitable repertoire of liturgical music for a parish.

2. Liturgical musicians are not an entity unto themselves in the liturgy but are part of a community that celebrates together. It is important that the music leaders work with the parish's liturgy committee and their pastor when preparing their music and are aware of the other ministries as they lead the parish in singing.

3. The Triduum is the high point of the liturgical year, and the way the music is prepared should reflect that. Some large parishes that have several choirs for the Sunday liturgies bring these choirs together into one for the Triduum to give a sense of unity to the three celebrations and an experience of the whole for the members.

4. It is best to choose one setting of the gospel acclamation, eucharistic acclamations, and the Lamb of God to use throughout the season, i.e., one for Lent and another for the Easter season (the best one the parish knows), and use them only during that season. People will eventually become more aware of the season because they associate certain music with that season.

5. Regarding instrumental music during Lent, the 1988 “Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts” by the Congregation for Divine Worship says that “musical instruments may be played only to give necessary support to the singing” (no. 17). This implies that instrumental music apart from supporting the singing is used at other times, such as during the time when people are gathering before the liturgy starts as a sign of hospitality to the body of Christ.

An optional entrance song for the First Sunday of Lent

The “Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and celebration of the Easter Feasts” suggests the following the First Sunday of Lent: “The first Sunday of Lent marks the
Music for the Sunday Assembly

beginning of the annual lenten observance. In the Mass of this Sunday there should be some distinctive elements which underline this important moment; e.g., the entrance procession with litanies of the saints” (no. 23).

There are several points to consider here. First of all, the directive calls for distinctive elements to mark the beginning of Lent, something such as a piece of music which is repeated every year. Secondly, if the litany of saints is used, note the connection with the Easter vigil, during which the litany of saints is sung during the baptism rite.

Suggestions for Sundays in Lent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entrance</th>
<th>Preparation of Gifts</th>
<th>Communion</th>
<th>Final Song (always optional)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>352</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Again We Keep this Solemn Fast</td>
<td>Take Up your Cross</td>
<td>You Are Near</td>
<td>O Cross of Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>359</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>597D</td>
<td>441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Come to the Water</td>
<td>O Merciful Redeemer</td>
<td>Bread of Life</td>
<td>You Are the Way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>371</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O Sun of Justice, Fill our Hearts</td>
<td>With our God</td>
<td>Take and Eat</td>
<td>Send Us Your Spirit (Pentecost)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Suggestions for Sundays of Easter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entrance</th>
<th>Preparation of Gifts</th>
<th>Ascension</th>
<th>Pentecost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>389</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus Christ is Ris’n Today</td>
<td>Christ Is Alive</td>
<td>Sing We Triumphant Hymns</td>
<td>Send Us Your Spirit (Pentecost)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>406</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>396</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sing with All the Saints</td>
<td>The Light of Christ</td>
<td>This Is the Feast of Victory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>385</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>397</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ the Lord is Ris’n Today</td>
<td>That Easter Day with Joy was Bright</td>
<td>This Joyful Eastertide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>388</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>398</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hail Thee Festival Day</td>
<td>The Strife is O’er</td>
<td>We Know That Christ Is Raised</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>399</td>
<td>409</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hail the Day That Sees (Ascension)</td>
<td>Creator Spirit, Lord of Grace</td>
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<tr>
<td>409</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creator Spirit, Lord of Grace (Pentecost)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Music for the Sunday Assembly

402 We Who Once Were Dead
410 O Holy Spirit (Pentecost)
408 Come To Us (Pentecost)
413 Filled with the Spirit's Power (Pentecost)

Communion
603 Gift of Finest Wheat
403 Now the Green Blade Rises
605 I Am the Living Bread

Final Song
386 Good Christians All, Rejoice
383 Alleluia, Give Thanks
393 Something Which Is Known
400 Praise To God in Heav'n Above
401 Praise the Lord (Ascension)

Glory to God
This song of praise is omitted during Lent. It is sung ("with bells on") during the Mass of the Lord's Supper to mark the beginning of the Triduum and during the Easter vigil (again "with bells on") when the Triduum reaches its climax. It is sung during all of the Sundays during Easter and also on each of the weekdays in the Octave of Easter.

Responsorial psalms
Musicians are encouraged to use the responsorial psalms provided for each celebration in CBW III. If, however, the assembly is not accustomed to singing a different refrain for each Sunday or the cantors have difficulty learning a new one each week and the parish is better off using a seasonal psalm, seasonal psalms are provided in the hymnal for the five Sundays in Lent and the Sundays of Easter.

Gospel acclamation
During Lent the Alleluia is dropped and another acclamation of praise is used in the gospel acclamation. See CBW III, nos. 258-65. The Alleluia is also not used in other musical settings, such as the Great Amen, and hymns that include the Alleluia are not used.

Music for Specific Rites
Ash Wednesday: During the imposition of ashes: Psalm 51 (CBW III 41, 44, 57, 83);
621 A Grant to Us, O Lord;
364 Have Mercy on Me.
(Other music may be the same as that for the First Sunday of Lent.)

Passion (Palm) Sunday
• At the beginning: 59, 60 or 61 Hosanna
• Procession with palms: 62 All Glory, Praise and Honor
• Proclamation of the Passion: at specified places sing either the gospel acclamation (refrain) or choose from the following: CBW III, 45, 47, 52, 64.

Triduum
1. Holy Thursday: Mass of the Lord's Supper
• Entrance: 435 Lift High the Cross, or any other song that glorifies the cross
• Washing of Feet
67 Ubi Caritas

595 Christians, Let Us Love One
Another
Music for the Sunday Assembly

- Presentation of gifts
  376 Where True Love and Charity 599 No Greater Love
- Transfer of reserved Sacrament
  68B Hail Our Savior's Glorious Body 68 Pange Lingua

2. Good Friday
- Silence at entrance
- General Intercessions: CBW III 71
- Veneration of the Cross: CBW III 72, 73, 74
  69 Sing, My Tongue, the Song of Triumph 435 Lift High the Cross
  381 Sing, My Tongue, the Ageless Story 368 O Cross of Christ
  379 Behold the Wood 373 Tree of Life
  382 When I Behold the Wondrous Cross

3. Easter Vigil
- Procession with Easter candle: CBW III 75A, B, or C
- Easter proclamation: 283D
- Rites of Initiation
  Litany of Saints: 86
  Blessing of water: 87 and 88, or 618 Who Calls You By Name
  Baptism (after each one): 4E or 4F
- Renewal of baptismal promises
  394 The Light of Christ 615 How Great the Signs of God's Love
  237 Music for the Sprinkling Rite

4. Easter Sunday
- Sequence: CBW III 690
- Renewal of baptismal promises: See above.
- Dismissal: 6L

5. Pentecost
- Sequence: 692

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Communion in the hand

Q: When was Communion in the hand introduced in Canada?

A: Communion in the hand was the Church's practice from the beginning until the ninth century, when unleavened bread came into use and when a change took place toward eucharistic devotion. This traditional practice was restored in 1969, when the Holy See granted permission to bishops' conferences that had requested it to introduce Communion received in the hand.

In Canada the practice was restored, at the request of the bishops' conference, in 1970 by a decree from the Congregation for Divine Worship dated February 12. The choice of receiving in one's hand or on the tongue was left entirely up to the individual communicant, and the communion minister is to respect that choice. The method of receiving in one's hand is based on a statement written by a fourth-century saint, John Chrysostom, who said that the faithful should extend both hands, making with "the left hand a throne for the right hand, which receives the King."

A document prepared in March 1970 by the National Liturgy Office recommended the following regarding the method of receiving: "It may be useful to propose to the faithful a precise way of receiving the host: the communicant extends his hands, one on top of the other; he receives the host in the palm of his hand, and with the other hand, takes the host and puts it into his mouth." The document adds that "the faithful should consume the host before returning to their seats."

Regarding the meaning of receiving Communion in this manner, the document says:

This manner of receiving Communion shows forth very closely the symbolism of our Lord's Last Supper; he wanted to choose a very human gesture—that of eating bread—as a sign wherein he would give Himself.

The communicant receives the host in his hand and brings it to his mouth. The action emphasizes an active personal involvement, one of the goals of the liturgical renewal.

It is also a reason for him to strengthen his faith in the great truth: it is the Body of Christ which he touches with his hands. "Let no one eat the Body of the Lord without first adoring it," says St. Augustine.

It awakens in the Christian a sense of his personal dignity. Since he has become a member of the Body of Christ by his Baptism, he may receive the Body of Christ in his hands. Let it be for him an invitation to deepen his respect for himself and for all redeemed in Jesus Christ. To quote Pope Saint Leo: 'Be well aware, O Christian, of your dignity ... Remember of what Head and of what Body you are member' (Sermon XXI).

To receive Holy Communion in one's hand is not something new. Indeed, it was the only form in use from the beginning of the Church until the end of our first thousand years.

Finally, responding to the invitation of our Lord: 'As often as you do
this, you will do it in memory of me,' to receive Holy Communion in one's hand points out that at Mass we do what Christ did at the Last Supper; he took bread, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: 'All of, take and eat of this.'

Communion rite: "sin" or "sins"

Q: In the invitation to communion in the Sunday Celebration of the Word and Hours, we say, "the sin of the world" while in the Mass we say "the sins of the world" at the Lamb of God. Is there a reason for this?

A: It might be worth noting that the Glory to God as printed in the Sacramentary uses "sin of the world," not "sins of the world."

In the Latin typica text of the Sacramentary (Missale Romanum), we find the plural form:

- in the Glory to God: "Gloria in excelsis Deo ... qui tollis peccata mundi, ...";
- in the Lamb of God: "Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi ...";
- in the invitation to communion: "Ecce Agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccata mundi, ...".

In the current CCCB English Sacramentary, one finds the singular form in the Glory to God ("Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world"), and the plural form in the Lamb of God ("Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world ") and in the invitation to communion ("This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world "). There may have been a mistake (which will be corrected in the English translation of the new [third] edition of the Roman Missal) in the singular version in the Glory to God.

The text of the Sunday Celebration of the Word and Hours, on the other hand, was prepared as such, approved by the bishops of Canada for use in our country and published in 1995 in English and in French. Both versions have the singular version in the invitation to communion: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" and "... l'Agneau de Dieu qui enlève le péché du monde." So, it is surely not a mistake.

How can we understand this singular version: "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"? First of all, it is important to remember that the singular version was used, according to the gospel of John, by John the Baptist, when he recognized in Jesus the long-expected Messiah, saying, "Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world ..." (John 1.29). This is the long-expected One that we receive in eucharistic communion.

The words of John the Baptist blend the idea of the "suffering servant" of the Lord: "... he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; ... he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; ... He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent ..." (Is 53.4, 5, 7; cf. Acts 8.32-33). Jesus Christ, the "suffering servant" of the Lord, took all sin on himself and offered himself as a "lamb of expiation" (cf. Lev 14). He also was the Passover lamb (cf. Ex 12; John 19.36) in the ritual which symbolizes Israel's redemption, as St. Paul writes, "Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch, as you really are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed" (1 Cor 5.7).

The plural form may underline the long list of our own faults, and the singular form, our sinful condition—or original sin. 

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This work is a collection of essays by friends and colleagues of Nathan Mitchell, published in his honour on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday to celebrate his gifts as teacher, musician, poet and lover of the liturgy. The essays in this collection by distinguished American liturgists cover a wide range of topics including eucharistic practices in the Late Antique East (Robert Taft) and in Lutheranism (Maxwell Johnson), the role of speech, poetry and imagination (Edward Foley, Gil Ostdiek, and Patrick Collins, respectively) and preaching (John Melloh and Andrew Ciferni). All the essays in this collection are scholarly and thought-provoking, clearly intended for the professional liturgist or serious student of liturgy. Especially recommended are the two very accessible essays on preaching. In one, John Melloh offers a fine exposé on the vocation of the preacher. Andrew Ciferni, in his essay, discusses preaching at the Eucharist on High Holy Days, and invites the reader to especially consider the preface texts as a way of framing the scripture-based homily.

**Theologia Prima: What is Liturgical Theology?** by David W. Fagerberg (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2004; 242 pp., $32 US.

Based on the previous work of Aidan Kavanagh, Robert Taft and Alexander Schmemann, the author of this scholarly work seeks to further define liturgical theology as foundational theology which takes place within the community engaged in liturgy. Echoing the words of Kavanagh, he identifies the liturgy as the Church in motion and advocates that the liturgy is the ascetic means by which the Christian is capacitated to imitate Christ. Hence, liturgical theology is not one branch of theology, nor is it a discipline that belongs solely to the academy. Drawing on both eastern and western sources, Fagerberg argues persuasively that liturgical theology is *theologia prima*. This work is recommended for the serious student of liturgy and, indeed, anyone who wonders why the liturgy holds a central place in the Christian life.


The sub-title of this book is a bit of a misnomer. The book does indeed specifically address implementing the RCIA in a rural or small-town setting, but everything that is said applies to every parish community: small or large, rural or urban. Relating the stages and rites of adult initiation to the stages and rites of Christian marriage, the author offers insightful anecdotal descriptions of each element of the RCIA as experienced in a rural community. In addition, Michael Clay offers analysis of the catechesis, ritual experiences and mystagogical reflection following each rite. Very helpful appendices provide practical models for catechetical sessions, discernment discussions and ritual preparation.

This is an eminently user-friendly and practical resource, which puts flesh on the directives for the process of initiation and the rites we celebrate with catechumens and candidates for initiation into full communion, and very highly recommended for pastors and initiation teams in all parish settings.

**Masterworks of God: Essays in Liturgical Theory and Practice,** by M. Francis Mannion (Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications, 2004; 263 pp., $18 US.

In this collection of essays, which have previously appeared in a variety of scholarly journals, the author addresses such topics as penance and reconciliation, Mass stipends...
and eucharistic praxis, liturgy and culture, liturgical music, and shaping the liturgical agenda for the future. The author offers an analysis of the current thinking on each of the topics treated. He concludes each essay by presenting what might be considered either a compromise or balanced position on the topic. The introductory essay, from which the title of the collection is taken, provides a thoughtful overview of the treatment of liturgy in the Catechism of the Catholic Church under the rubric of "critical affirmations." There is definitely some food for thought in these essays, but no significantly new insights for the serious student of liturgy.

**Daily Lenten Meditations: Prayerful Reflections from John Paul II**, edited by Rev. Max Polak (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2004); 100 pp., $14.95 US.

This collection of excerpts from the writings and homilies of Pope John Paul II is arranged to connect with the daily Lectionary readings for Lent and the Sunday readings for Year A of the Lectionary. They provide an excellent resource for personal prayer and, in some cases, may be helpful to homilists. Recommended.

**Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood: Theologies of Lay and Ordained Ministry**, edited by Susan K. Wood (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003); 275 pp., $26.95 US.

This is an excellent collection of essays on the theologies of lay and ordained ministries. The essay on the Ecclesiological Foundations of Ministry (Richard R. Gaillardetz), Priesthood Revisited (David N. Power), Presbyteral Identity within Parish Identity (Susan K. Wood) and Laity, Ministry and Secular Character (Zeni Fox) are especially insightful and provide the reader with a good balanced understanding of the relationship between ordained and lay ministries in today's Church. Highly recommended for all clergy and laity engaged in pastoral ministry.

**Living the Lectionary: Links to Life and Literature, Year C**, by Geoff Wood (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2003); 149 pp., $16 US.

The author provides a brief reflection on one of the readings for each Sunday of the Sunday Lectionary, Year C. Each reflection incorporates an excerpt from or reference to classic literature or a movie, TV show or music as a way of connecting the reading to the presence of God in daily life.

The reflections seem to presume a considerable familiarity with classic literature on the part of the reader. The reflections are also limited to only one of the readings for each Sunday, and do not take into account the relationship between the three readings proclaimed each Sunday. Nevertheless, there are a few gems in the collection, which will prove especially HELPFUL for those entrusted with the ministry of preaching.

**Voices from the Valley: Hymn Texts with Biblical Reflections**, by Genevieve Glen, OSB (Portland: OCP Publications, 2003); 168 pp., $17.95 US.

Each of the forty-two original hymn texts in this collection is accompanied by the author's pastoral commentary, a suggested familiar hymn tune and occasions for use. Genevieve Glen has a wonderful gift for lifting out metaphors from the Scriptures and shaping texts which express the Church's prayer. Included are texts for the liturgical year, daily prayer, and sacramental rites. Every serious pastoral musician will want a copy of this collection both for their personal prayer and for communal song. Highly recommended.

Reviewed by Murray J. Kroetsch
An essential book for every Christian home

Blessings AND Prayers
FOR HOME AND FAMILY

In straightforward language that is clear and dignified, this new 384-page book of blessings offers hundreds of traditional and contemporary blessings and ritual prayers, suitable for all occasions in the life of Christian families and communities. It will be useful for marking milestones, such as weddings or the birth or adoption of a child, for celebrating important family rituals, such as birthdays or anniversaries, and for offering solace in times of sorrow.

A book that will be used year round, and treasured for years to come
The range of blessings and prayers in this collection touches on everything from farming and fishing to computers and family pets. The book also includes the very beautiful basic and traditional prayers, such as grace before and after meals, creeds, litanies, the rosary and Way of the Cross.

Make your next gift long lasting and meaningful
Designed for real-life situations at home, at work, in the parish or in the community, Blessings and Prayers for Home and Family makes an ideal gift for Christmas, weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, and other celebrations or events. It would be a valuable resource for adult faith groups, sacramental preparation classes, marriage encounter groups, and other parish and community groups. A dedication page allows you to write a personal word to the one to whom you offer the book.

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