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In This Issue...

We present the second part of our examination of adult initiation through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. The first thing that strikes everyone as they begin working with adult initiation is the jargon: "catechumenate," "precatechumenate," "mystagogia," and so forth. Personally, I'm in favor of utilizing many of these terms, derived as they are from the Christian Scriptures and early liturgies in Greek. They are deep and allow for more than one level of meaning.

Take "mystagogia," for instance. Mystagogia can be modernized quickly to mean experience-based learning. The experience is the ritual action of Easter Vigil baptism and all the accompanying rites and prayers. The learning is what the newly baptized person feels and thinks during this life-defining, time-measuring event. These thoughts, experiences, and meanings are not "unpacked" easily or quickly.

And mystagogia can also be deep and rooted in the great Christian tradition. Mystagogia is when the sponsor and the candidate discover their full equality, to risk living the Gospel of Jesus in their everyday lives. Mystagogia is when the practice of religion and the experience of religion are fully and "mystically" one.

In this issue, Aidan Kavanagh raises a central question: What are we to make of the Americanization of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults? As he says, it is not the final word, but it is a necessary one for all who wish to delve into the mystery that is ours. And we offer two very practical articles: the experience on Long Island (Ferrone) and starting out in music ministry (Tufano). Two longer looks at liturgy and Christian initiation... which, of course, is liturgy... describe the importance of sacred play (Smith) and music leading to the prayer of Christ (Waller).

In this issue, too, we begin the detailed announcement of the NPM National Convention, June 25-29, 1989, in California. Nothing is more important in the work of the Association than the gathering of the folks, for it is here and only here that NPM's true energy and life appears. When I hear that tremendous voice that is NPM's, it thrills me to know the power of song and the richness of the singers. I ask myself: How can we keep from singing? Make plans to be there. It'll be worth it.
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Premium 3-Cassette Package (full-length recording of most selections performed by a variety of choirs—a joy to listen to!!) $24.95
A Diocesan Litany

I want to thank you for your article, “Making a Diocesan Litany: The Saints of Baltimore” (Pastoral Music, August-September 1988). I have become aware of the number of dioceses that are developing a litany using the names of the parishes in their diocese. It certainly brings a more personal nature to diocesan liturgies.

A few months before my ordination to the diaconate, a classmate mentioned to me a litany he had seen for the Diocese of Erie written specifically for the ordinations that year. Without seeing the Erie litany, I began to compose one for Baltimore using the names of the parishes in the Archdiocese. I grouped them in the following way: Christological titles; Marian titles; the Apostles and early disciples of Jesus; the Church Fathers and Doctors; Founders and foundresses of religious communities; martyrs; all saints, holy men and women; the popes; and the archangels. I became very concerned about the music. This litany is contemporary and I felt a chant would not fit. I... came across Bob Hurd's “O God, Hear Us.” The refrain would fit perfectly with the litany and while the verses were being read, a musical accompaniment could be played under it. After reaching Bob Hurd and getting his permission to use his music, the litany was printed.

The litany was done at both the diaconate and priestly ordinations that year. Although it is a little longer than most litanies, the people attending the celebrations realized that we were not only calling upon the saints in the litany but also the parishes for whom the saints' names were given.

... Once again I thank you for making your readers aware of the possibilities of praying through song and particularly personalizing prayers through the use of a diocesan litany.

Bel Air, MD

Fr. O'Brien has agreed to make available copies of the litany he describes for study purposes to any interested parties. Those who might wish to develop a similar litany using Bob Hurd's music would, of course, have to receive reprint permission from him. Write: Rev. John E. O'Brien, Jr., Saint Margaret Church, 141 Hickory Avenue, Bel Air, MD 21014.

No Hybrids

In the June-July 1988 issue of Pastoral Music [page 29], Lawrence J. Madden stated, "The Catholic partner, for example, would do well to learn Judaism's home rituals and be prepared to educate children in their spirit and practice as well as in the spirit and practice of Catholic worship. There need be no conflict in this area."

What absolute nonsense! Every child is entitled to a strong sense of personal identity. A child can be reared as either "Catholic" or "Jew," but there can be no hybrid. A young child will only be confused by Madden's format. No truly observant Jew whom I know would agree with him either.

Mrs. Katherine Batt Diablo, CA

We direct the writer's attention to the context of Fr. Madden's quoted remarks that describes the great difficulties involved in a Jewish-Catholic marriage. We also refer her to the following statement by the Commission for Religious Relations with Judaism of the Secretariat for Christian Unity (28 October 1975). "Without lessening what is original in Christianity," the Commission urges, we need to recognize the "abiding value" of the Hebrew Bible, but we also need to discover our common bonds in belief and worship. In particular, they write, "All should be mindful of the common bonds exist-

To a large extent, Christian opposition to Marxism is due to its different understanding of matter. Christianity says that matter is not merely an object for human manipulation and possession. It is a bearer of God and a place where we encounter salvation. Matter is sacramental.

This universal sacramentality reached its maximum concentration in Jesus Christ, the primordial Sacrament of God.

Leonardo Boff
Sacraments of Life,
Life of the Sacraments

Scoreless Instrumentalists

I'm frustrated and angry. My dilemma is as follows: My instrumentalists for upcoming holiday liturgies would like to have their scores in order to prepare adequately in a good amount of time. The publisher has been advertising them for quite a while, but told me today on the phone that the scores aren't finished yet and will probably be done "in a few weeks."

Why do publishers do this to us? Recordings are out long before a score appears on the scene. If publishers expect us to buy and use their publications, then would it not make sense to release all of the scores at the same time as the recordings, instead of advertising things in their catalogues which they can't readily produce? One friend has been waiting for the same scores, but told me that when the time came, she wrote her own parts...

I'm being strung along by a publisher and in turn am straining along my flutists, oboist, clarinetist, and harpist. If I'm the only one who has ever been in this situation, throw this letter away. If not, then let us make ourselves more vocal. Who knows, maybe one day we will be able to get all of the instrumental parts at the same time as the choral score—which is bound in such a way that it remains open on the music rack by itself!

Michael J. Batcho
Saco, ME

Letters Welcome

We appreciate letters from our readers. Shorter letters have a better chance of publication than longer ones, and because of space demands we cannot promise to publish all the letters we receive. We are open to criticism, but, of course, we encourage positive criticism rather than negative. All letters are subject to editing. Address your letters to: Editor, Pastoral Music, 225 Sheridan Street, NW, Washington, DC 20011-1492.
St. Patrick R.C. - Troy, Ohio  
St. Catherine of Siena R.C. - Austin, Texas  
St. Veronica R.C. - Cincinnati, Ohio  
St. Mark United Methodist - Carmel, Indiana  
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On Day Three we turn to the basic problem: How do you get the congregation to sing? Alice Parker has some clear ideas about this; and our experience is, when she teaches, we learn!

On Day Four we relate to a major concern that is at issue locally, in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, and nationally: How do liturgy and cultural diversity mix? How do you celebrate multicultural liturgies? But there is more to it than meets the eye. The more difficult question is how to preserve two values honestly: the ritual nature of the Roman Rite and the popular culture of any ethnic community. Are these two unmixable oil and water? By asking Bob Hovda to make this presentation, we have asked someone who is totally sympathetic to cultural identity and has spent his life immersed in the ritual dimension of the Roman liturgy. This is going to be an interesting day, because, as on Tuesday, this day will have events (quartets) that attempt to celebrate both elements. Come and judge if we succeed.

Friday, Members’ Day, will contain the wrap-up session with Joseph Gelineau, SJ. He has developed a new composition using Psalm 103 that integrates both elements: singing in sorrow, singing in joy.

But there is lots more that is new this year. We’ve asked Jim Dunning to follow each major session with a “So What?” session. Can you imagine three thousand people discussing at one time? This is an effort to make sure that you, the attendee, member, get your say at the Convention. That’s going to be downright fun.

And we have decided to focus the special interest sessions even more closely. So, for example, we have a workshop session for the DMMG that is a research project on assembly song. We are going to ask the attendees: “What techniques do you use to get your congregation to sing?” and then we’ll compare them with one another in the effort to begin a scientific examination of what steps are necessary to enable a congregation to sing. Gordon Truitt will lead this one.

And there are big events, too: the Durufle Requiem at the Crystal Cathedral with Fred Swann and Frank Brownstead; and a Haas/Haugen/Joncas Songfest; NALR and Roger Wagner and John Rose at the organ; and ... and ... and ... and ...

The Members’ Breakfast on Friday will feature special awards for the NPM Chapters, Music Industry persons, and the NPM member of the year. You’ll want to be part of this gala closing morning event.

As if that is not enough, there will be more music sung and more music played and more music industry representatives than ever before. California is outdoing itself.

If you have never been to southern California, this is a special time to visit.

Musicians, we are presuming that you will invite your clergy to attend the Convention with you. It’s easy to talk a pastor into going to California, even for part of a conference!

Clergy, we are counting on you to send your musicians for a few days of relaxing celebrations. Parishes continually tell us that these events make a difference in their prayer.

Come for a few days early or stay a few days longer and enjoy the beauty of California and the special tours we will be offering as options. The local people are ready.

Make your plans today.

Parish Videos Needed

The NPM Western Office is coordinating an effort to collect and show the best videotapes available of parish celebrations throughout the country. Have any of your events been put on tape? We are looking for special feast day liturgies, vigils, regular Sunday celebrations, adult initiation rites, weddings, funerals, and any type of prayer and praise when your community is assembled.

During the National Convention a special Video Theater area will be open to the entire convention. We will publish a schedule of parish videos to be shown, so that you may be present when your parish is “on screen” to answer questions or add commentary. This is your chance to share the good work you are doing and to see and hear the work of others.

Please submit copies of your video (VHS format only) with a cover letter about the event and samples of any worship aids that were specially created for the celebration. Videos must arrive at the Western Office by April 1 and will not be returned until after the Convention. Mail to: NPM West, 1519 S.W. Marlow, Portland, OR, 97225. Attn: Nancy Chvatal. If you have any questions call: (503) 297-1212.

Cantor School 1989

Scripture is the emphasis for this year’s Master Class. Rev. Roland Murphy,
O.Carm., renowned Scripture scholar, G. W. Ivy Emeritus Professor of Biblical Studies at Duke University, and Co-editor and Contributor to the Jerome Biblical Commentary, has agreed to be part of the faculty. Father Murphy's knowledge of and love for Scripture will permeate each day's work. Sr. Maureen Sauer will provide voice classes, paying special attention to older voices. Dr. Elaine Rendler will focus on music theory, sight singing, and improvisation. Jim Hansen will provide the glue that holds it all together and the challenge to move beyond the status quo. This Master Class in Scripture for Cantors is scheduled for June 12-16 in Owensboro, KY.

**Choir Director Institute 1989**

The first Master Class for Choir Director Institute alumni will be held in Oklahoma City, OK, on July 10-14. This "second level" program will dig deeply into John Rutter's Requiem and Joseph Haydn's *Little Organ Mass*, gleaning rehearsal techniques and score preparation methods, with some musical analysis on the side. The culmination of the week will be a public performance of these two pieces, plus a few smaller works, at the Oklahoma City Cathedral.

If you have attended a Choir Director Institute, you should have already received an invitation. If you haven't received one, contact the NPM National Office.

**Guitar School 1989**

Bishop Lane Retreat House in Rockford, IL, is the site for this year's Guitar School. The dates are July 17-21. The faculty includes Bobby Fisher (coordinator and guitar teacher), Tom Rasely (guitar teacher), Gary Daigle (guitar teacher), Tria Thompson (liturgy), and Bonnie Faber-Phillips (voice). Brochures with complete information and registration forms are due to hit the mail around February 15.

**Organ School**

Baldwin Wallace College’s Conservatory of Music is the site for this first School for Organists. The College is just five minutes south of the Cleveland, Ohio, airport. Three pipe organs are available for master classes. Participants will be assigned to master classes according to skill level (basic, intermediate, advanced). Most practice time will be spent on pianos, so that basic manual skills can be solidified. This week-long, intensive training session for organists is scheduled for July 24-28. Brochures with complete information and registration forms will be available after February 15.

**NPM Workbook in St. Louis**

Archbishop John L. May of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, MO, has recommended *An NPM Workbook: Job Descriptions, Contracts, Salary* by Rev. Virgil C. Funk as a "supplement" to the Archdiocesan Worship Binder. The Workbook is not Archdiocesan policy, but it is recommended as a "very helpful" resource, according to the Archbishop's letter to Rev. Bruce H. Forman, and a copy will be available in the Archdiocesan Worship Office.

**Haas-Cotter Wedding**

The marriage between Jeanne Cotter and David Haas on October 14, 1988, gathered as celebrating church a number of musicians and artists familiar to NPM. While planned by David and Jeanne, the wedding celebration centered on the church assembled as primary witnesses and was an extraordinary time of prayer.

A new wedding blessing composed by Michael Joncas and Vicki Klemma, combined with the music of Chopin, Hawaiian chants, Haas, and Cotter to provide the assembly's song.

Some of the musicians, dancers, and artists who contributed to the event were Marty Haugen, Sue Seid-Martin, Michael Hay, David Berrickman, Bobbie Fischer, Bonnie Faber-Phillips, Rev. John Foley, S.J., Joe Camacho, Rev. George DeCosta, Tria Thompson, Betsy Beckman, Rev. Michael Sparrow, S.J., and a number of very talented Minneapolis-area musicians who served as choir, dramatists, and cantors. Rev. James Moudry presided at the eucharist and served as homilist in a wonderfully gentle manner.

NPM salutes Jeanne and David and echoes the blessing danced by Betsy Beckman.

**Meetings and Reports**

**UK Music Survey**

The Anglican Archbishops of Canterbury and York have appointed a commission to review the present state of church music in the United Kingdom. This is the first such commission in thirty-seven years, and for the first time it will include members from the Free Church and the Roman Catholic Church. The Commission will draw up a final report after three years of work and submit its observations and recommendations to the two Archbishops.

**FDLC National Meeting**

The National Meeting of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (October 10-13, San Diego, CA) echoed a theme that has been a major goal of liturgical renewal in the United States—the link between liturgy and social justice. A symbolic event at the beginning of the meeting, however, reflected the problem with implementing this goal. At times it has gotten lost in the fog, just as Archbishop Raymond Hunhhausen's plane was fogged in at the Seattle airport, preventing him from delivering the opening homily.

The homily was still delivered, but by Rev. Richard Hilliard. In it Archbishop Hunhhausen reminded the delegates that "it is impossible to worship God in good conscience and ignore our clear responsibilities to work at building up [God's] kingdom." Besides challenging us to give "preference for the poor," the Archbishop wrote, the liturgy "gives a glimpse of what the kingdom [of God] could be like."
Other speakers who addressed the same theme included Sr. Thea Bowman, Rev. J. Bryan Hehir, Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA, and Rev. José Rubio. Sister Bowman suggested that “if you don’t want to talk about justice, call it love,” while Father Hehir pointed out how difficult it has been to forge the link between liturgy and social justice. About 250 people participated in the meeting, and during the business sessions, they voted to express to the Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy their concern about “the confusion in pastoral practice” resulting from Vatican permission for a wider use of the 1962 edition of the (Latin) Tridentine Mass.

**Colloquium: Liturgical Renewal, 1963-1988**

In celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, and as part of its own bicentennial celebration, Georgetown University hosted a Colloquium (December 2-4, 1988) prepared by the four U.S. pastoral liturgy centers: The Georgetown Center for Liturgy, Spirituality and the Arts; The Corpus Christi Center for Liturgy; the Loyola Pastoral Institute; and The Notre Dame Center for Pastoral Liturgy.

The Colloquium was a follow-up to the Notre Dame Parish Study. It focused on liturgy in English-speaking parishes in the United States, and used some of the tools developed by the Notre Dame study. The basis for the Colloquium was a survey of the best “ordinary” Sunday liturgies in fifteen parishes around the country in the fall of 1987. The report is more a narrative of events and reactions prepared by people in each parish than a scientific study. At the Colloquium, the presenters reflected on the report from a variety of perspectives: sociology, ritual studies, the theology of grace, Christology, ecclesiology, the meaning of symbol, liturgical history and theology. Reactions were also given to the study from the viewpoint of social justice, Hispanic communities, and the arts, and the Colloquium closed with a look into the future.

Participation in the Colloquium was by invitation only. About two hundred liturgical leaders (many of them familiar to NPM members) took part and became part of the process through regularly scheduled round-table discussions. The major benefit of the Colloquium was the application of the social sciences to the study of liturgy in a context of dialogue with other disciplines, e.g., theology, history, and ritual studies.

**News from the BCL**

At the beginning of Advent 1989 (December 3) Hispanic Catholics in the United States will have a “texto unico” of the Order of Mass in Spanish. This is the text that will be used in the U.S. Spanish Sacramentario, which is expected to be finished by mid-1990.

*Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers* is a new publication containing prayers and blessings to mark the rhythms of daily life and the cycles of the church’s liturgical year. The publication, carefully bound and illustrated, is intended for individual, family, and small-group use.

A statement on presenting Jews and Judaism in preaching, *God’s Mercy Endures For Ever*, and guidelines for diocesan liturgical commissions and offices of worship, *Promoting Liturgical Renewal*, are also available from the USCC. This latter document will affect the way diocesan commissions and offices relate to musicians in the parishes.
and the development of the music ministry in dioceses.

For information, contact: USCC, Office of Publishing Services, 1312 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20005.

Reborn to Life

Cooperative Ministries, Inc., have taken an interesting approach to providing resources for adult initiation. They are producing an annual service ($49.50 per year) that combines articles, music, and a continuing dialogue about experiences in a series of "building blocks." Each piece deals with one aspect of celebrating the rites. Rite Song, for instance, contains music for the various rites (except for those in Holy Week; they will be published in another project called New Life, New Birth), and Living Word is a supplement for preachers. The goal is to offer a set of resources that form "a rich library to all working to bring these rites alive in their local community." For more information contact: Cooperative Ministries, Inc., PO Box 4463, Washington, DC 20017-4463. (800) 999-7729.

The Arts in Schools

The National Research Center of the Arts, an affiliate of Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. (630 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY), has released the results of a survey titled The Ongoing Crisis of the Arts in Education. Among their findings: 91% of Americans believe that school-aged children ought to be exposed to theater, music, dance, exhibitions of paintings and sculpture, and other cultural events. And 59% of those surveyed do not believe that the children in their community have had "enough opportunities to hear music and go to plays." 75% of respondents wanted the school budgets to finance full-credit courses in voice or singing; 67% believe that the arts are as important as "English, foreign languages, math, science, and social studies," and 72% were willing to pay more taxes to make sure that children learned about the arts.

Transitions

Rev. John Garrieri has completed his term as Executive Director of the Secretariat of the Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy. He served in the Secretariat from 1978 and became Executive Director in 1981. After a sabbatical at the Institute of Ecumenical and Cultural Research, St. John’s University, Collegeville, MN, he will work in liturgical renewal in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

Rev. Ron Krisman, in a related move, has been appointed Executive Director of the Secretariat of the Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy, effective December 1, 1988. He has served as Associate Director of the Secretariat since 1982.

Briefly Noted
ORECO in France

A new organization has been formed in France to develop orchestral music in Catholic schools. The Orchestre Régional de l’Enseignement Catholique de l’Ouest is under the direction of Jacques Pelois. A bulletin and directional material about the orchestra are available in French. For more information, contact: ORECO, 2, Rue des Grands Jardins, 35360 Montauban-de-Bretagne, France.

Religious Popular Music

A small, primarily European group has begun to form Music and Life: An International Association of Religious Popular Music. Their focus is the role of music in catechesis and liturgy from the perspectives of communication, teaching, and research. Their first meeting was held in Rome, October 31-November 5, 1988. Representatives from Austria and French Canada provided an international flavor to a predominantly Italian meeting. Topics addressed included "Music and Evangelization," "Music and Television," and "Music That Leads to Life." Rev. Virgil C. Funk spoke about the popular roots of liturgical music in North America. For more information, write: Musica e Vita, Via Terricciola, 25, 00138 Roma, Italy.

Madre del Pueblo Cubano

The Ministry of Worship and Spiritual Life of the Archdiocese of Miami has released a new recording of songs and hymns dedicated to Our Lady of Charity, patroness of the Cuban people. The performance by the Hispanic Choir of the Miami Archdiocese is a collection of Marian music prepared with the assistance of the Southeast Pastoral Institute and the Shrine of Our Lady of Charity, Miami. Available from: Office of Worship, 9401 Biscayne Blvd., Miami Shores, FL 33138.
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REGIONAL INSTITUTES with a location near you:

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Greetings!

The newsletters and program announcements received at the National Office make it obvious that there are many active NPM Chapters around the country. Special thanks to these Chapter officers for their vision and dedication. Announcement of these events in Pastoral Music and Notebook help newly forming Chapters in their future programming.

Several meetings for Chapter officers are planned for the Long Beach Convention:

- Monday, June 26:
  - 10:00 A.M.-12:00 noon, Directors of Permanent Chapters;
  - 1:00-2:00 P.M., Directors of Temporary Chapters;
  - 2:00-3:00 P.M., How to Form a Chapter;
  - 5:00-6:00 P.M., Reception (Cash Bar);

- Tuesday, June 27:
  - 1:00-2:00 P.M., Chapter Officers Meeting;

- Thursday, June 29:
  - 1:00-2:00 P.M., How to Form a Chapter (repeat).

Plan to attend the meeting(s) focused on your role.

Rick Gibala
National Chapter Coordinator

Arlington, Virginia

On November 14, 1988, Dr. J. Michael McMahon and Mr. Richard Gibala gave a presentation on the new funeral rite at St. Mary’s Church, Fairfax, with Patti Pulyo as host. Plans are underway to celebrate receiving permanent Chapter status.

Dorothy Peterson
Chairperson, Steering Committee

Buffalo, New York

The September meeting, the first of the 1988-89 year, was held at St. Gabriel’s Parish, with Regina Doherty as host. Presenters were Sr. Judith Marie and Frank Scinta. Sr. Judith’s talk was entitled: “Transformed through Excellence: Music Minister. Person of Prayer and Song.” Frank Scinta’s talk was: “Transformed through Excellence: Meeting the Vocal Challenge.” Dues are $10.00 per year, except for those belonging to NPM—their annual dues are $5.00.

Pat Otis
Chapter President

Charleston, South Carolina

The meeting on November 10 at Nativity Parish was led by Brother Stan and Patrick Conway, and “Creative Use of Keyboards in Liturgy” was the topic. The $10.00 annual Chapter dues are presently being collected to help with Chapter expenses.

Candy Wilson
Chapter Director

Hartford, Connecticut

On October 3, Alice Cavo conducted a workshop on using Kodaly vocal method for individual vocal technique at Our Lady of Mercy Church in Plainville.

Joan Laskey
Chapter Director

Lake Charles, Louisiana

On October 11, Sr. B. Derouen, O. Carm., led an evening of reflection for all liturgical ministers at St. Louis High School.

Rev. Jace Eskin
Chapter Director

Metuchen, New Jersey

Rev. Gregory Malovenz, Director of Evangelization for the diocese, was guest presenter on October 23 at St. John Church. His address to the musicians was: “The Role of the Pastoral Musician as Minister and Evangelizer.”

Peter Ceulka
Chapter Director

New Orleans, Louisiana

Jim Hansen conducted an all-day workshop on October 22 at St. Rita School, focusing on music from Oregon Catholic Press.

Pierre Dosogne
Chapter Director

Orange, California

The October program setting included three different gathering places, each with a purpose and a theme. There were a place of prayer, a place of discussion, and a place of repast. The title of the presentation was “Opening Doors on Advent,” it was given by Patti Chastler, Jan Stanakis, Mark Purcell, and Olivia Vincent.

Jan Stanakis
Chapter Director

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

The October gathering, led by Dr. Sandra Willets, focused on choral techniques—diction, tone quality, and the like. Members gathered at St. Michael’s Church in Elizabeth, with Eleanor Ruhl as host, and received a tour of the new church. The Beaver/Lawrence branch members met at St. Gregory Church, Zelienople, with Gayle Wittman as host. Clinicians were Mary Lou Gottermeyer and Helen Prezkop.

John Romerl
Chapter Coordinator

Scranton, Pennsylvania

The choir of St. Thomas More Church hosted the local Chapter on October 10 for a supper and social. Following dinner, Liz Powell and Nancy Valtes led the showcase and exchange for learning on the Christmas season, Epiphany, and the Baptism of the Lord.

Paul Ziegler
Chapter Director
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The Director of Music Ministries Division (DMMD) had a meeting of its board of directors on October 20, 1988, at Blessed Sacrament Church in Alexandria, VA. The following items were among those reported or discussed at the meeting.

**Logo**
The board adopted a DMMD logo. Our thanks go to Al Deitz, the artist, and to Fr. Bruce Forman, who guided Al in his creation. Watch for the logo in future DMMD publications and promotional materials.

**Membership**
The membership of DMMD now stands at about five hundred. Because of computer difficulties at the NPM National Office (see the story in “Association News,” last issue), we have not yet begun to collect the $10.00 annual dues for DMMD. Watch your mailbox! On the success ledger, however, the past year saw the publication of a DMMD directory. Thanks to Fr. Bruce Forman for taking on this task and carrying it through so speedily.

**Professional Concerns**
John Romeri and Maureen Morgan represented the DMMD at the interdenominational meeting on professional concerns sponsored by the American Guild of Organists (AGO). John and Maureen report that delegates from other denominations were surprised and impressed that Roman Catholic musicians have established such a network as the DMMD. They also said there was a great deal of interest in Fr. Virgil Funk’s workbook on job descriptions, salaries, and compensation.

DMMD was also represented at a meeting sponsored by the National Conference of Diocesan Directors of CCD (NCDD), which has received a grant from the Lilly Foundation to conduct a study on the issue of just compensation for full-time lay professionals working in the church. Michael McMahon is representing the Division on the steering committee of this study, which is scheduled to be completed late in 1989.

The board approved John Romeri’s recommendation that DMMD proceed with a supplemental pension plan in conjunction with Mutual of America. This plan, which will take the form of a tax-deferred annuity, should be ready for presentation to our members at the National Convention in Long Beach.

**Education**
In addition to special educational events for DMMD members at the National Convention next June (see below), there will be a special week-long gathering of DMMD members planned for sometime in 1990. Watch for details. In addition, DMMD members will be interested to know that NPM has planned to institute an organists’ school in the summer of 1989, modeled on the very successful institutes for cantors, choir directors, and guitarists (see “Association News”).

**Election**
During the coming months, DMMD members will receive a ballot in the mail for an election of regional representatives to the board of directors. Five directors will be elected, with members voting for one representative only from their region. The winners of the election will be installed at the Convention in Long Beach.

**Praxis**
By now DMMD members should have received the first issue of the quarterly DMMD newsletter, Praxis. Thanks to our able editor, Barbara Ryan, for undertaking this project. Please help her by sending any news you might have: Barbara Ryan, 340 Third Street, Dunellen, NJ 08812.

**National Convention**
The NPM National Convention in Long Beach should be an exciting time for members of the DMMD.

There will be two special programs for DMMD members during the Convention. The first of these will be a two-session workshop on collaborative ministry conducted by Beatrice Fleo. The second will be a two-session process to codify the wisdom and experience of DMMD members on the topic of enabling the song of the assembly. The leader of this process will be Gordon Truitt.

On Monday, June 26, there will be a special preconvention workshop for DMMD members that we are very excited about. Watch for details. You won’t want to miss this one!

J. Michael McMahon
MIDI Users

Music Education and Pastoral Music

MIDI technology has been available and in use by musicians for less than a decade. In the grand tradition of time “according to the church,” we might conclude that it would be at least another century before such technology would interface with our pastoral work, but not so! MIDI and electronically affected/effectuated music are leading the assembly’s song all across the United States in a wide variety of forms. The same phenomenon is taking place in the field of music education. Teaching methods, techniques, attitudes, and values are being measured against the new age of electronic possibilities with students.

Since all of us, as pastoral musicians, are products of some form of music education, we may profit from paying close attention to the changes in that field. And since it is often necessary for leaders and directors to do some music education with members of their group, we may find help in the literature and methods being developed in music education that incorporate MIDI technology.

Recommended journals for continuing your education in music methods and practices include: Choral Journal, published by the American Choral Directors Association; Music Educators Journal, from the Music Educators National Conference (MENC); and the Bulletin from the Council for Research in Music Education at the University of Illinois. Many other general publications in the field of music and performance can be found in your local music dealer’s store. They often contain articles directed at music education. We have named several of these in this column over the past few months. Just review back issues of Pastoral Music for reminders.

In the November 1988 issue of Music, Computers & Software (MC&S), two music education articles discussed the future of electronic music and its effects on educational methods. In “Pondering the Future” Herbert Deutsch wrote that the history of American music education began in church “singing schools” after the Revolution. He said of this practice: “First it served the church choir, then it led to the development of school choirs during the days of the Industrial Revolution.” (Imagine church choirs being so important to a community that a “singing school” would be created to prepare people to participate!) The history of music education overlaps here with our history as pastoral musicians.

Deutsch also identified “the silence of theory” and the destructive results of teaching music on a chalkboard with lines and silent marks and words. His eye-opening discussion of the politics of changing educational methods in communities and the need to allow effective methods to grow out of the creative experience of teachers and the joy of students pointed out further parallels with our world of liturgy and music education.

This article showed that there are two tracks in music education. One is aimed at performance and uses performance as a goal to provide intense motivation for teacher and student to reach levels of excellence. The pastoral musician, whether leader or choir and ensemble member, has been using this route to music education and has been called to excellence during NPM Conventions throughout the liturgical renewal years.

The second track, “classroom music,” is presented as the heart of music teaching, but it is only effective at producing musicians or people who love music when it is rooted in creativity and play. This is where MIDI technology—the synthesizers, mixers, recorders, amplifiers, software, and the rest—all become tools for experiential, real, and deep learning for people interested in music. The pastoral musicians who have begun to experiment with electronics are ready witnesses to the enthusiasm created in their work and to the power that MIDI technology has for recruiting new and younger people into church music programs. Story after story is told of the young rock musician or the electronic engineer in the parish who has become the mainstay accompanist or assistant in the Sunday celebration!

Getting Terminological

We recommend the 1987 Musician’s Terminology Manual, an excellent book by Bo Tomlin, published by Key Clique, 3960 Laurel Canyon Boulevard #364, Studio City, CA 91604.

Surveys Being Counted

The MIDI-Users Special Interest Group Surveys are coming in at a rapid pace, but the percentage of return is too low! Please check your files, find your survey form, complete it, and return it to the Western Office as soon as possible. It only takes a few minutes of your time, but it makes an important contribution.

Your Parish Video

Don’t miss the invitation to send your parish celebration video for use during the National Convention. See the invitation in “Association News” in this issue.

God is an inner experience that touches the very roots of our existence... God surfaces for us as mystery, so absolute and radical a mystery that it has its announcement in everything, penetrates everything, shines through everything.

If God is the unique Absolute, then everything in existence is a revelation of God. For those who experience God as alive in this way, the immanent world becomes transparent, allowing this divine, transcendent reality to shine through it. The world becomes diaphanous...

For those who see everything in terms of God, the entire world is one grand sacrament.

Leonardo Boff
Sacraments of Life,
Life of the Sacraments
United Methodists on Tour

Two national choirs of young people from the United Methodist Church in the U.S.A. will be making their tenth annual tours to Europe this summer. The United Methodist Festival Choir will be visiting Czechoslovakia, West Germany, East Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Yugoslavia, and Hungary after some time in rehearsals in Winchester, VA (June 21-July 10). For more information, write: Educational Tour Consultants, PO Box 2018, 16 N. Braddock Street, Winchester, VA 22601. (800) 336-2515; in Virginia, call (800) 336-4515.

The Methodist Youth Chorale, composed of singers 16-22 years old and directed by Dr. Carlton R. Young, will be touring England and Wales from June 18 to July 5. For more information, write: Methodist Youth Chorale, PO Box 128001, Nashville, TN 37212-8001. (615) 292-5734.

Computer Planning Resource

The Corpus Christi Center in Phoenix, AZ, has released the first sections of its new computer-based liturgical planning aid, Liturgy Plus. This set of software contains pages from the Sacramentary, the Lectionary (all three approved translations), and various other documents, as well as ideas and commentary from people like: Gene Lavender, Kevin Irwin, John Gallen, Gary Daigle, Rory Cooney, Robert Rambusch, John Baldwin, Elaine Rendler, Larry Madden, and Mary Alice Piil.

The series is designed to follow the liturgical year. The first two packages, Advent '88-'89 and Christmas '88-'89, each sold for $95.00. An annual parish subscription fee of $350.00 includes all five seasonal packages. For more information, write: Corpus Christi Center, 7575 N. Sixteenth Street, Suite 25, Phoenix, AZ 85020. (602) 371-8977.

Choral Conducting

Prentice Hall Publishers have released the sixth edition of Robert L. Garrettson's Conducting Choral Music (500 pages, $28.00). This is a step-by-step guide to organizing, teaching, rehearsing, and conducting a successful choral music program. It covers practical topics from breath control to music budgets. Though written primarily for school music programs, it contains a lot of tips useful for parish choral conducting as well. Write: Steven T. Landis, Prentice Hall College Mail Order Sales, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632.

Augsburg + Fortress

Augsburg Publishing House and Fortress Press have combined their operations as a result of the union of several Lutheran denominations to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) on January 1, 1988. They will retain the two distinct book lines, with Augsburg books being designed for general inspirational reading and Fortress books being addressed to theological and academic topics, but they will be working from one site. The new address for both is: Augsburg Fortress Pub-

lishers, 426 South Fifth Street, Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN 55440.

New Tonal Director

Dr. Austin C. Lovelace has been named Tonal Director for Associated Organ Builders, headquartered in Auburn, WA. Dr. Lovelace holds degrees from the School of Sacred Music, Union Theological Seminary, New York, and has served congregations across the United States. He has taught at four different seminaries and has served on the editorial boards of four major hymnals. He has also served on the councils or boards of the AGO, the Hymn Society of America, and The Choristers Guild.

We cannot hide the fact that in the Christian sacramental universe there has been a process of ritual mumification. The present-day rites hardly speak for themselves. They have to be explained. And a sign that has to be explained is no sign at all.

Leonardo Boff
Sacraments of Life,
Life of the Sacraments

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**THE PASTORAL PRESS**

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For Clergy and Musicians: Liturgy

Sacred Play and the Loaf-Giver

BY F. JOSEPH SMITH

Since Vatican II the church has been viewed predominantly in terms of service and ministry to the needs of God's people. Among the many needs of the church community, good musical liturgy is central. As the word itself connotes, liturgy is a "work of the people" that takes place where people come together: in the parish community. Here people, clergy, artists, and musicians meet to become the singing church, a very important part of a truer and musical society. In the creative perspective of Vatican II, people are meant to participate in the church and not be mere passive observers.

The liturgy has always been regarded as a work of art, and particularly the old Latin liturgy is acknowledged by scholars and liturgists to have been, in its own classic way and time, a kind of masterpiece of good taste. Compared with the elaborate eastern rites, the Latin liturgy was a triumph of clarity and succinctness. The musical form that the Latin Mass engendered reflected this aesthetic balance, and the early history of western music is, in fact, the history of church music. Yet what began as an early vernacular liturgy gradually turned so stylized that it became a thing apart from the people and their ordinary language, hence the need for English and other modern languages in the liturgy to make it easier for people to take part in what is transpiring before them, in their midst.

Rules of the Game

Liturgy contains all the classic elements of sacred play, and so the liturgist is not primarily someone who has merely studied liturgical texts or history, but rather someone who is able to bring together the various participants along a range of the liturgical arts. The liturgist has to be, in effect, a kind of "producer-director." He or she has to be competent especially in the art of music as an integral component of the liturgical act. Liturgy requires an active talent; it is not an arena for nonliturgical power ploys or intrigues. The liturgical musician, well trained in the art, may be the person to give the best service to the people and the various ministers. Indeed, in many if not most places where there is good liturgy, this is the case.

The elements of "sacred play" are palpable in liturgy. The event happens in a sacred place to which people come, a place quite distinct from the arena of their everyday activities. Behavior in this sacred arena is different from that of everyday, too, even though the liturgy is an event for "Everyman." Music and the arts, though derived from our common culture, are adapted to this sacred circle. The liturgy also takes place at a special time, part of a weekly cycle or a seasonal return.

Playing their instruments and leading song, musicians provide the global atmosphere of sound that envelops the "sacred game." They form an antiphonal choir, as it were, supporting what the people and the presider act out in symbolic gesture and word. In Mass settings composed for musicians and congregation, all may participate together in living sound.

Philosophers tell us that this participation together in providing the global sound atmosphere for a liturgy entails the bonding process at the core of the religious concept, for the word "religion" means being "bound back" onto origins, symbols, and whatever makes up genuine community. Sacred play, as musical, is central to the very notion of living religious worship; it is not a mere adjunct, but is integral to worship.

At the practical level, how do you experience a liturgy that is bereft of musical sound? It is surely a lesser experience, especially when we realize that the origin of the Christian eucharist, the Last Supper (especially if it was a Seder), was probably accompanied by hymns and song, in line with a classic tradition that endures even today. For the Jewish community, song has remained essential to liturgical expression and celebration, particularly at festival meals like the Seder. Liturgy is not just an event of the spoken word; even St. Augustine reminded us, "Who sings, prays twice." Music lifts the liturgy to a wholly transformed level of religious consciousness and participation. Though only a part of the service, music elevates the whole event into a new dimension. Musical liturgy works out and acts out the bonding process that is at the very heart of religious consciousness. Music and the arts are integral to the religious process and the formation of a living community.

There's a Word for It

In Christian history we have used the word "service" more frequently than "liturgy," at least until recent times and our increased awareness of liturgical aims. Roman Catholicism and the Anglican (Episcopal) tradition have also used the word "Mass," where other traditions have spoken about "the Lord's Service." Whatever we name it, a key task of theology is to clarify and amplify the emergence of community in this framework.

In English the concept of "service" is more biblically based than it is in other languages, for the English word "lord" does not mean, at least etymologically, "someone who dominates" the way ancient kings and tyrants did, "lording" it over their subjects. We are enjoined not to lord power over one another; and music is powerful, often perceived as a threat by ministers of the word if they are not sharing in the sound, but interested, instead, in words and power ploys.
The English word “lord” actually derives from “loaf-warden,” i.e., the guardian and dispenser of life-giving bread, not the dominator but the nurturer—something much closer to the eucharistic liturgy in word and act.

The core of the eucharistic liturgical drama is the figure of the Loaf-Giver giving himself as bread and wine, as life-giving nurturer. Thus the liturgy is a sacred banquet as well as sacred play and drama. I believe that these notions help lift theological discussions of the tradition to a more sensible and meaningful level, away from literalist or abstract theories once so common and onto a plane of experiential interpretation, closer to the heart of religion as such and of genuine community building. Classic theories of liturgy were the stuff of schism and post-Reformation fragmentation. A musical phenomenology of religion gets at its roots, at what unifies rather than divides, at a saner and more wholesome understanding of the often mystifying phenomena of religious ritual and symbol.

Liturgy is bread-for-the-world symbolized in the words, deeds, and very life of the Loaf-Giver. But while we speak of spiritual bread and drink, we can hardly be silent about the urgent need to bring bread to a starving world. What music is there at an empty table? And why are so many tables empty in the first place?

Organizations like Bread for the World endeavor to bridge the gap between spiritual and material wants by providing real bread to the poor and indigent. Yet why are so many starving amid plenty, often not even receiving “crumbs from the rich man’s table”? The U.S. bishops’ recent pastoral letter on the economy addresses itself to this issue. We cannot celebrate a spiritual supper while our fellow sojourners go wanting.

The image of the Loaf-Giver, then, not only opens up a new perspective on liturgy and liturgical service, but it also makes us aware of the actual state of the world in which we live. Liturgy becomes an integral part of life, not just a “Sunday service.” Of course, human beings do not live by bread alone; but without it we do not live at all. Without living humans, no liturgy is possible. This is far from a truism today; it is an urgent world issue that we have to address effectively. If we send our brothers and sisters away hungry, how can we celebrate a proper liturgy?

For similar reasons, the parish budget must give a living wage to full-time musicians and proper compensation to part-timers. The classic Hungry Five musical groups did not turn out very good musical fare. How could they sing on empty stomachs? These things are all of a piece: good liturgy and music, feeding the hungry and giving drink to the thirsty, starting a home—where not only charity but justice must begin! The parish music budget is a statement not only of faith in musical liturgy, but also of basic consideration for the welfare of the musicians in this ministry. But more of that topic later.

Here we seek to lay down general principles concerning music ministry; we will follow these up by addressing specific issues. It has taken the church some time to recognize that music is a distinct ministry deserving of the name, and it will take more time and proper organization for pastoral musicians to get the respect they deserve and to disentangle themselves from any ruinous parish politics and uncalled-for meddling.

Musicians, whether lay or clerical—and this is one ministry that bridges any gap among church persons—are not just playing musical gigs when they perform in church. And the music ministry is more than the sum of its parts; it is more than so many Masses played, so many meetings and rehearsals attended. The music ministry has a rationale and purpose going beyond clock hours to the quality hours of musical commitment. It would be a poor parish, and a poor country for that matter, that produced few musicians or did not support them and encourage their tribe’s increase. Mozart was buried in a pauper’s grave; Sibelius was considered a national asset. Most musicians struggle somewhere between these extremes.

The parish community is musically important today in itself and also in its role as one of the few remaining places where live music can be heard. Funding is available from several foundations interested in actively promoting church music; while these funds might supplement, they cannot replace the serious support of the parish itself.

American Catholic parishes, unlike other church settings, erected magnificent buildings, but few had even an adequate musical program. The “edifice complex” did not include music! As a result, one finds the best church music outside the Roman communion, in churches that have had a tradition of encouraging good choral and instrumental groups out of funds often more meager than those available in Roman Catholic parishes. There are many encouraging signs, however, and while the current situation is mixed, the future, if properly planned, could be inviting to musical talent willing to work creatively in liturgical music. A subsequent article will look at this topic in more detail.

This series of articles by Dr. Smith will continue in a future issue of Pastoral Music.
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For Musicians

RCIA: What Musicians Need to Know

BY VICTORIA M. TUFANO

Congratulations! You've just been hired as a music minister. You've been at the parish for a week, and you've got a great start on the year. Everyone on the staff has been friendly and hospitable. The RCIA Coordinator has told you that she'll stop in soon to visit with you about the catechumenate. If you've never worked in a parish with an active catechumenate, you may think that it's nice of her to let you know about her program, but it really doesn't have anything to do with you.

But the RCIA Coordinator knows how integral the liturgy is to the initiation process and how integral music is to the parish's life and worship. So she knows how integral you are to adult initiation. If this idea is news to you, don't panic. This article will give you a basic idea of what to expect.

Let's start at the very beginning (a very good place to start, as someone once sang). The acronym RCIA stands for the "Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults," the way that adults and children of catechetical age become members of the Roman Catholic Church.

It may seem obvious to say, but we're talking about a rite, a prescribed formula of public prayers and actions. This rite is different from most in that it is celebrated in stages over an extended period. It is like other rites in that it is meant to reflect the truth of the faith and the experience of those who celebrate it. These similarities and differences are reflected in the text of the rite, which offers not only a series of liturgical services, but also a process to foster and support conversion in the lives of those being initiated.

The process outlined and celebrated in adult initiation is very human; it recognizes that people enter new relationships and groups gradually. One useful analogy for adult initiation is that of courship and marriage. The relationship between a man and woman that leads to marriage centers on the deepening love and commitment of two individuals, but it also involves a mutual incorporation into the circle of family and friends of the prospective spouse.

Like courship and marriage, the RCIA involves a relationship among persons. The individual's growing relationship with God is called conversion, the heart of the process. But conversion also involves the incorporation of the individual into the church community. The rite outlines a series of stages by which the person becomes a member of the church, but the timetable for that process depends on the progress of the individual's relationship with God and the community, just as the timetable of courship depends on the progress of the couple's relationship.

Early Stages of Conversion and Initiation

The first stage of initiation is called "inquiry" or "precatechumenate." It begins when the individual contacts the church for the first time. By this time the conversion process has already begun, though how it will develop in each individual's life cannot be predicted. It may begin with a crisis, or through a friendship, or marriage to a church member, or perhaps through an attraction to the church's rituals or music. However it happens, conversion always begins at God's initiative.

The precatechumenate is a period of informal association with the church during which the "inquirers" meet some members of the church including, perhaps, the pastors, catechists, and deacons, among others. The inquirers ask their questions about the church, and the members try to answer those questions and share the Gospel message. As a member of the parish team, you may be asked to be part of these sessions to share your own faith, talk about your role as a minister of music, and, perhaps, teach some of the music that the community sings at worship. The goal of this period is to build trust and foster the beginnings of faith.

Should the inquirer choose to enter a formal relationship with the church, the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens is celebrated at a Sunday liturgy. This is the ritual introduction of the inquirers to the community. The inquirers ask for what the church has to give (e.g., faith, eternal life, the grace of
because this rite usually takes place away from the parish community, the parish musicians will probably not be involved in it. But an optional parish “Rite of Sending the Catechumens for Election” is part of the RCIA: it allows for personal testimony and for affirmation by the parish community. It is celebrated on a Sunday before the Rite of Election, and the parish minister of music can play an important role in it.

After this rite, those to be initiated at Easter are called the “elect.” (Previously baptized people who will be received into full communion are called “candidates.”) During Lent the elect and the entire parish community engage in a period of “purification and enlightenment,” preparing by self-examination and repentance to celebrate the Easter sacraments. One way this is accomplished is through the “scrutinies,” which invite the elect and the faithful to examine their lives in the light of the Gospel.

The scrutinies are celebrated on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent (with a special scrutiny-like penitential rite as an option for the candidates for full communion on the Second Sunday of Lent). The readings for the scrutinies are always taken from the Lectionary’s A Cycle. In the gospel stories of the woman at the well, the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus the church instructs the elect on the personal, communal, and demonic nature of sin. Following the homily each Sunday, the church prays for the removal of what is weak, sinful, or defective in themselves, and prayers of exorcism are offered over the elect.

During Lent, too, the creed and the Lord’s Prayer may also be presented to the elect. The church hands on these two great symbols of our faith and prayer in preparation for sacramental initiation.

The Easter Sacraments

The elect may gather during the day on Holy Saturday to pray and fast in preparation for the Easter Vigil. At the Vigil the community remembers the history of its salvation and celebrates the continuation of that salvation in the risen Christ through the initiation sacraments—baptism, confirmation, and the eucharist. This rich ceremony offers ample opportunity for the pastoral musician to support the church’s action and to encourage the community’s new members.

Following their initiation the newly-baptized are called “neophytes.” (The already-baptized are simply full members of the church.) The Easter season’s fifty days are a period of “mystagogy” or “postbaptismal catechesis” for them, during which they reflect on their experience of the sacraments they have received and on their part in the church’s mission. As with the catechumenate and the scrutinies, this reflection occurs chiefly through the liturgy of the word on the Sundays of Easter—another set of opportunities for the parish music minister to support and interpret the church’s action.

During this season the bishop may invite the newly-initiated to celebrate the eucharist with him, and there may be other social or catechetical sessions. After Pentecost the neophytes, their godparents, and others may meet occasionally to support the newly-initiated in their new way of life. Such deepening of their faith and communion with other members of the church will continue to sustain them throughout their lives.

Beyond Beginnings

This basic introduction has initiated you into an understanding of the RCIA. The best way to deepen your understanding is to read the rite (its 1998 revised, final edition, rather than in the earlier interim edition). You should also consult books about the RCIA, such as those mentioned in Dolores Martinez’s article in this issue, and look at the music for the rites, such as the list provided by David Haas in the last issue of Pastoral Music (December-January 1989).

Help is also available from people who have worked with the rites, such as the people who staff the institutes of the North American Forum on the Catechumenate. “Beginnings and Beyond” offers an experience of the process in a retreat-like atmosphere, and “Liturgies of the RCIA” offers an in-depth look at the rites. Liturgists and musicians are always on the institute teams, and the liturgies celebrated at the institutes show various ways that music is integral to the rites.

The goal of adult initiation is not merely the acceptance of new members; it is the ongoing conversion and revitalization of the church as it seeks to carry out Christ’s mission. A parish that is constantly reflecting on the Gospel’s meaning, sharing that Gospel with its neighbors, and working to build up God’s kingdom in its midst is a parish that truly has something to sing about.
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Adult Initiation American Style, Part II
RCIA: Not a Peanut Butter Sandwich

BY AIDAN KAVANAGH, O.S.B.

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is perfectly able to take care of itself in the modern church if three things happen. First, it must be correctly perceived for what it is, apart from what some of us fantasize it to be. Second, its fundamental presuppositions must be clearly grasped. Third, we must have the boldness to work steadily at recovering something we in the west have lost, namely, a baptismal piety and literacy centering on Easter.

These three things are in my estimation the most critical of all the many issues that confront the growth of the RCIA in North America or anywhere else, for that matter. On this growth may hang the fidelity of the church for generations to come.

The RCIA Must Be Rightly Perceived

For What It Is

The RCIA is not a program or, as one often hears, a process; it is what it says it is: a rite. Moreover, it is a fairly large and complex rite, the parts of which are meant to be performed over a standard period of some three years. The rite thus involves liturgy done at different times in various settings, involving the already baptized faithful in larger or smaller numbers as well as catechumens, who are presumed to be growing into the successive stages of the rite as it is coherently celebrated. The directions for each stage of the rite are clear, on the whole; often they are well detailed and filled with helpful options at every point.

No printed rite can do more than this. Even the best rite, however, requires more than good structure, clear rubrics, and substantial content. It also must presume clear heads, an awareness of tradition, and common sense on the part of those who celebrate it. Otherwise even the best rite will never come off the page it is printed on and become the faithful act of a faithful people. One can never rule out the possibility that even the best rite can become a dead letter before it is ever used, unless its users have clear heads, an awareness of tradition, and common sense. These three qualities reveal that the RCIA is not a program or a process, but a rite, a liturgical ordo, to be perceived and dealt with as such. And good liturgy does not proceed from our confusing it with educational programs or therapeutic processes, any more than automotive efficiency proceeds from confusing an engine with a hubcap.

Nor should the RCIA be perceived as a plan for parish renewal. It is a set of liturgical rites, deeply traditional on the whole, the purpose of which is to initiate by catechesis, exorcism, prayer, example, and sacrament those who are coming to faith lived in the church. The rite is the way in which the church responds in the most solemn and public manner to the grace of faith that God has given into the hearts of its converts. The rite gives structure and coherence to the fundamental act of the church’s obedience to God, whose grace impels those of good will to seek God in the body corporate of God’s Son, the church.

For the church to fail in this fundamental act of obedience to God in Christ, or to seek to avoid it, or to try to reduce it to a parish renewal program or some other smart endeavor is for the church to go down a road that leads inevitably to confusion and infidelity, with good intentions all around. But good intentions and...
document is devoted to evangelization and to that conversion therapy and faith formation known as catechesis. Evangelization and catechesis are the overture and first act of the grand opera of Christian initiation, which is consummated in baptism—confirmation—eucharist, celebrated in that order, the eucharist being the seal or finale of the entire grace-laden work. Without a firm anchor in the sacraments of initiation, evangelization readily slips into mere propaganda, and catechesis is easily transmuted into an educational program. When this happens, pressure is put on the sacramental sequence of baptism—confirmation—eucharist to conform to educational patterns designed for those children of Christian parents who were baptized in infancy.

The uncomfortable fact is that the rite presupposes evangelized catechumens who are coming into the church from outside and for the first time. All the initiation rites, including those for infants or for older people who are to be received into the church from other Christian communions, are *mutatis mutandis* based on this fundamental presupposition. That is why it is grievously paradoxical to speak of the need for evangelizing and catechizing the already initiated, i.e., the faithful. The implication is that, being at last evangelized and catechized, they now stand in need of some kind of “reinitiation” to cap off their newfound or refound faith.

Suggestions for such reinitiation rites have included everything from rebaptizing the already baptized to using confirmation as a repeatable act to be administered, like the anointing of the sick, whenever it is felt to be needed. More responsibly, there is the renewal or reaffirmation of baptismal promises, an essentially abnormal practice that seems to be standard in some places at the end of an educational unit of instruction for pious people that is called, wrongly, catechesis. (I call the renewal of baptismal promises abnormal simply because the normal renewal happens when we say “Amen” each time we receive holy communion. Baptism, after all, is the way eucharist begins, and eucharist is how baptism is sustained in the life of Christians.)

Finally—and most ominously—there is a usually unarticulated drift toward using various rites of ordination or commissioning as ersatz initiations into some higher level of Christian consciousness and practice. The notion of ordination or commissioning to some form of ministry as an initiation into higher class or power in the church is not exactly new, but the rapid spread of it into special interest groups of many different sorts is turning it into a facile presumption that has pernicious results, not least of which is the politicizing of holy orders, and even liturgical presidency, to the extent that the ordained are less able to serve as authoritative and effective living “sacraments” of unity for the church at large. Ordination and initiation are complementary sacramental complexes, but they are different complexes, nonetheless, and must not be conflated, even for pious motives. Christian initiation makes us all priests of God in Christ, but it makes no one a deacon, presbyter, or bishop (nor even a special minister of communion, for that matter).

Using the RCIA as something designed to ease the problems experienced by parishes and certain groups of the faithful is what gives rise to problematic and anomalous results such as these. People who use the RCIA in this manner do not seem to realize that the faithful’s need for instruction and ongoing conversion is ill served by tearing a few pages out of the catechetical sections of the RCIA, using them for a semester, and then “graduating the class” with a reinitiation ceremony of one kind or another.

Such use of the RCIA is inadvisable on many grounds. It dispenses us from evangelizing nonbelievers, pagans, and the unchurched—a difficult and often scary business. It allows us to turn the equally difficult and costly matter of catechesis from conversion therapy into easier and more manageable programs of education for children and the immature of whatever age. It gives us liturgical rites to use on the unready instead of focusing on pastoral malfeasance in preaching and teaching.

We need to regain our nerve and get on with the business of being God’s people in Christ for the life of the world.
God's word through the lectionary week in and week out. It encourages us to be benign, open minded, vaguely liberal, sensitive, nice, and comfortable in our sheepfolds, rather than standing boldly on mountaintops of temptation, transfiguration, prayer, hard teachings, and executions—all high places that our Lord was known to frequent, and from which many of his followers walked away in almost terminal confusion, including the prince of the apostles on more than one occasion.

To summarize: The RCIA is not directed to the already baptized as its objects. The RCIA is directed basically to the never baptized, and the already baptized are presumed to be marshalled as its agents. The never baptized are our fundamental evangelical and catechetical challenge to be faithful to God's grace in them. Hold on to that thought.

The RCIA’s Fundamental Presuppositions Must Be Clearly Grasped

Initiating adults presupposes three activities: evangelization, catechesis, and liturgical celebration of the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and eucharist, in that order. The already baptized faithful are the agents, not the objects, of all three activities.

The first activity is evangelization. Evangelization takes many forms. It may be done on soapboxes, door to door with free literature, on radio and television with advertisements, one-to-one in the workplace, and so on. But perhaps the most effective sort of evangelization is that done by families and parishes who live the gospel clearly and splendidly for all people of good will to see "how these Christians love one another." The best evangelization is the living of an evangelical life, that is, a life soaked through with the gospel of God in Christ. And "gospel" means "good news."

This fact about evangelization tells us something profound about who we are as Christians. We are people who are in the news business rather than the knowledge business. We have more in common with Dan Rather and CBS that with John Dewey and the NEA. We are not an educational movement at base, and Jesus Christ was not fundamentally a religious educator (as I am). The Word of God did not take on flesh to teach us what any person can know by the light of natural reason—that 2 + 2 = 4, or that the pope lives in Rome, or even that there is an unmoved first mover whom some have called "God."

Rather, Jesus the Christ came to let us in on news we could never otherwise have known: that the Holy One who sent him, and whom he called, daringly, his Father, was reconciling and uniting all things to himself in his Son. Jesus the Christ then set about demonstrating for us what this piece of news meant through the brief span of his astonishing public life, a life that revealed to us who we are and what we are capable of in our self-alienated viciousness. He did this so powerfully that the self-knowledge we should have had by simple reason struck us as bad news indeed. The news our Lord gave us about his Father, himself, and ourselves has had us doing handstands ever since, but its truth is ruthless and invincible. It strips away our delusions, calls us to account, convicts us of sin, and forces on us a hope and a light that are almost more than we can bear. The Hound of Heaven may be gentle, but the news he brings us has teeth.

All this is why we are a people of news rather than knowledge. It is also why evangelization is not an option we may or may not pursue if we are to remain faithful. In this context current statistics are uncomfortable in the extreme. Since it appears that we baptize eleven infants for every adult each year in this country, we can hardly be called an evangelical church, unless the birthrate (which is itself in decline) can plausibly be called a form of evangelization. Our Lord left no specific command that Christians should go forth into all the world and breed. If anything, he counseled continence and had a high regard for virginity as a perduring state of both soul and body. And this, too, is part of that astonishing news he brought us, who thought we had domesticated sex by sentimentalizing it and making it a way to God. Jesus' news says otherwise: Sex by itself, like any other of God's good gifts in the world, is perfectly capable of turning on us if we let it get loose and of eating us alive—a very old piece of knowledge that we have recently begun to relearn as news of the worst sort.

The second activity is catechesis. This activity seeks to help people who have been upended by the astonishing news of Christ Jesus come to terms with it in their lives. Coming to terms with that news means necessarily that those lives will have to be reassembled—carefully, 31
prayerfully, sensitively, and with a love as tough as that exhibited by the great catechist himself, Jesus the Christ. He wrote no books, taught no courses, graded no papers, graduated no one, gave out no degrees. Rather, he spent much time in prayer, in exercising demons who had their victims by the hair, and in proclaiming a news that probably lost him more followers than it gained. Fifty days after his resurrection, their numbers were down to eleven people and his mother. The news that held these few together killed off most of them who went out to preach it, as it did to many of their successors as well for the next three hundred years.

Given all this, where in the world we got the idea that we can evangelize by the birthrate and that catechesis is a synonym for religious education are questions that would take longer to answer than I have time. No doubt one factor is our absorption with primary and secondary schooling in order somehow to process the results of a functionally evangelical birthrate. But we must understand that Christian initiation’s deep presumption of catechesis as requisite for the passage of one into that ecclesial faith signified and caused by the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and eucharist is not a presumption of religious education.

The presumption is of catechesis, conversion therapy, which is the deepest formation of a nascent faith beginning to take hold in the bent complexities of a human heart. This cannot be done in a classroom or by syllabuses, lectures in theology and ecclesiastical data, graduations, and degrees. It must be done by people who have come firmly to terms with the gospel in their own lives—in pulpits and confessional offices, at the holy table, by much prayer and fasting, with exorcisms, obedience, patience, and candor all around. It takes years, on the whole, and should not be overly conceptual, but deeply affective. Its object is not only the mind, but the heart and the senses as well. It is the way our Lord taught.

This is precisely the point at which celebration of the liturgy, the third activity presumed by the RCIA, becomes so important. Christian liturgy, like the incarnate Word himself, speaks not only to the mind, but to the heart and senses as well. The liturgy is the way Christians behave when they stand in the presence of the living God, that is, worshipfully. When they stand in this presence, moreover, part of the news that sustains their lives is that they stand there in Jesus, the Christ of that same living God, for they have been made one in him and, in him, one with the one who sent him.

The liturgy has less in common with an act of thought than it has with a loving and beautiful embrace. And what we embrace in our worship is the source of all beautiful things, who has reconciled all beautiful things we have made ugly by our sins with himself in his Christ. Thus we worship our source by means of all splendid things—words, emotions, hearts, thoughts, bread and wine and oil, flowers, wax, water, fire, memories, music, color, space, movement, sounds and silence, order, poetry, symmetry and proportion. Standing amid all these before God in Christ, we discover always anew how utterly gorgeous all things are in their deep ordering to their source. How they humble us who have gone astray and tried, futilely, to defile God’s Son. And how they sing to us that their source is expressibly more lovely than even they are.

It is precisely in this sense that the liturgy must be called an aesthetic endeavor. And like any other aesthetic endeavor, it is necessarily an artful (not an art) performance. This means that the liturgy requires a lot of work and practice. Like a great act of music or ballet or the Sistine Chapel ceiling, a liturgy does not just do itself. It is a crafty act that requires crafty people who work hard and practice their craft; and a craft has rules that must be known, obeyed, and followed. Otherwise the aesthetic endeavor becomes nothing more than an act of self-indulgence—a fingerprinting, a peanut butter sandwich done by overaged four year olds.

The RCIA is not a peanut butter sandwich. It is a rite, a long-term liturgy of great scope and immense potential beauty in the hands of crafty people who know their craft under grace. Such people realize that the rite of initiation must be carefully calibrated to build up and accumulate over a long period of time so as to be regularly consummated in the death and rebirth of us all in Christ at the paschal vigil, that mother of vigils in which we come closer to God in Christ than at any other time of the year. This is why we baptize here and begin to feed our newly born ones from the holy table here. The RCIA shows us how to do this.

To put it bluntly, if the three presumed activities of evangelization, catechesis, and liturgical practice are ignored or trivialized, the RCIA will not grow. It will wither on the vine and soon become just another dead letter, producing temporary excitement and a passing interest on the part of those with ecclesiastical tastes, but little more. If the faithful are not faithful, then so far as the RCIA is concerned, the jig is up. It will have no agents; there will be nothing to initiate anyone into, and no one to initiate.

We Must Recover a Baptismal Piety And Literacy Centering on Easter

Not only must the RCIA’s fundamental presuppositions be clearly grasped and the document’s liturgical nature be perceived for what it is, we must also work steadily at re-elaborating an environment in which the rite can take root and breathe. It is an environment, an ecological system, which we in the west have largely lost over the past thousand years or so, but which has been kept in the Christian east. It is a baptismal piety and literacy centered on Easter.

To illustrate what I mean, it may be necessary to recall how things were until the eve of the Second Vatican Council. Easter then consisted of the Way of the Cross on Good Friday, perhaps a Tenebrae service or two, the
Vigil and lighting of the new fire on Saturday morning (which few attended), and high Mass on Easter Sunday—all but the Way of the Cross in Latin. The Vigil was not allowed to be done on Saturday evening until 1951, and then only ad experimentum. Baptisms were usually not done during this busy season, except perhaps on Saturday or Sunday afternoon, when they were most often done during the other seasons of the year. The font was blessed during the Saturday morning Vigil, but almost never used.

All this represented the rubble of earlier practice, and it was both symptom and cause of a baptismal piety and literacy that had gradually shrunken to the narrow confines of cleansing infants from original sin, thus saving them from the jaws of hell. Baptism was always to be administered as soon as possible (quamprimum) immediately after birth. So strong had this attitude become in the late 1950s that the Holy See issued an instruction on the matter, which was quickly interpreted as requiring infants to be baptized, not in parishes, but in the hospitals where they were born. One wonders how far this policy of clinical baptism might have gone had the Second Vatican Council not been convened soon after.

The mentality illustrated in this episode placed almost total emphasis on the ex opere operato effects of a sacrament (in this case, the cleansing from original sin) and little if any on the fullness and integrity of the sacrament as sign, as though the effect and the sign had no fundamental relationship. One could thus not only have an effective sacrament with little or no liturgy, but the less liturgy one had in sacramental administration, the more effective the sacrament would, somehow, seem to be. This was an odd dénouement in a theological tradition teaching that sacraments, precisely by signifying, cause what they signify, a teaching that led theologians like Thomas Aquinas to classify sacraments as signs, not causes. The dénouement supported liturgical minimalism, and it helped to foster both the individual priest’s low Mass as the functional eucharistic norm and clinical baptism as the baptismal norm. The tendency was toward sacraments with as little liturgy as possible.

This minimalism is one major reason why the eucharistic and baptismal reforms of the Council, which sought to recover the robust richness of sacramental signification by restoring the full liturgical forms by which sacraments are celebrated by all the church’s members, have had less than complete success since the Council. This is why, for example, the restored baptismal Vigil has languished in many places. It is also why implementing the vast liturgical rite of adult initiation is very apt to fare poorly. The fact is that we have been seriously understimulated by a dearth of sacramental symbolism due to liturgical minimalism in performing the rite for a very long time. This factor has weakened the survival of a baptismal piety and literacy in our church.

Lacking such a piety and literacy, we now find ourselves without much dependable precedent and without a living tradition of rich baptismal art and discourse when it comes to understanding and implementing a far-reaching restoration of initiatory liturgy in our day. If you doubt this, look carefully at (or for) the fonts and baptisteries in our churches. Note also the remarkable differences in the way we celebrate Christmas and Easter—Christmas with well-attended midnight Masses, Easter with poorly attended Vigils, which in most places must begin in the early evening, so that people, for some reason, will not have to be out late. This suggests that we have a vigorous, but largely sentimental and nostalgic, piety of Jesus the baby, but little piety of what this baby accomplished when he finally brought us home to his Father, trampling Death by his death. Lacking the latter, the former piety looks more like a function of civil religion than of the Gospel.

But there is a further dimension to all this that fills one with even more disquiet. It is the quite general illiteracy one sees all around, among clergy no less than laity, with regard to the great images and figures of baptism that flood our theological, pastoral, and liturgical tradition. This illiteracy is due, I think, to that constriction of baptism limiting it to doing something about infants, and to the liturgical minimalism that goes with it. These two factors have rendered us deaf and blind to other baptismal images, such as standing in great peril (being swallowed whole by some horror from the deep, eaten by lions, betrayed by colleagues, reviled by the jeers of the unclean, and so on), and to great baptismal figures, such as Jonah, Esther, Moses, Israel escaping from Pharaoh through the Red Sea, Daniel, the three young men in the fiery furnace, John the Baptist, and finally Jesus the Christ, to name only a few.

Yet the catechumenal and baptismal readings during Lent and at the Easter Vigil are awash with such images and figures; they once covered the walls of our baptisteries. But I wager that, for most of us, the story of Susanna and the dirty old men who spied on her in her bath conjures up only a secular ideological image of sexism and oppression, not one of catechumens facing opprobrium from the world for the purity and simplicity of their new lives. Without such images baptism and all that leads up to it become abstract, uninteresting, unstimulating, pale, and trivial, except as some sort of intellectual problem for theologians and religious educators to worry.

But with such images and figures we are forced to think much harder about the very heart of conversion and its costs, and we can see more clearly that the life that baptism throws open to us issues from the very core of reality itself—if we are first brave enough to die to that existential constriction and minimalism known as sin. Otherwise we are adolescents staring at the Sistine Chapel ceiling without knowing the God of Genesis, the patriarchs, Sybils, and prophets. It's all just a videotape without the music.

We simply must recover a baptismal piety and literacy centering on Easter. One way to do this is by maximizing
rather than minimizing the liturgical rites and readings contained in the RCIA. Take those rites and readings seriously; do them straight and with flair. They will, over time, stimulate, first, our imaginations and then those of the people we serve precisely around the point at which our faith comes into its most intense focus: baptism at Easter, when we in Christ die and rise to a life this world cannot give.

In conclusion, I am now even more convinced than when I began that this presentation has been little more than an exercise in reductionism. I have been forced to reduce to only three those issues I see as most critical for the future of the RCIA in North America. If the RCIA is not rightly perceived for what it is (a rite); if its fundamental presupposed activities are not clearly grasped; and if we do not recover a baptismal piety and literacy centering on Easter—if at least these three critical issues are fumbled by us—then the RCIA has no future.

Let us be clear with ourselves that it is quite possible for reformed rites to fail. This has already happened with the reform of the breviary. I suspect it has happened, or is happening, with the reform of penance. Neither of these reforms looks bad on paper; they just have not taken hold in the church, nor have they delivered on their promise. The divine office or liturgy of the hours is simply not observed in any parish that I know of, and the use of sacramental penance has severely declined. One cannot rule out the same thing happening to the RCIA. In all candor I must confess that I give it less than a fifty per cent chance of success, and you will recall that I have been one of its most consistent public advocates for the past fifteen years.

My dysphoria is not due to any lessening of admiration for the rite, which on paper is probably the best, and certainly the most challenging, of all the liturgical reforms produced since the Council. My gloom is due, rather, to the state of the church in North America at the present time. I find it bemused, confused, lacking in morale, apostolic direction, and discipline. It is increasingly polarized and politicized by special interests that seem to care more for themselves and their own agendas than for the Gospel and its faithful proclamation in common to the world. I think that we in the church are allowing ourselves to be sold one dubious bill of goods after another by the modern world and by more or less attractive people and groups who do not give a fig for Catholic Christianity’s deep apostolic tradition, which is the bedrock on which its claims to authority and religious truth rest.

But I am hopeful that this dismal view may be in the first stages of reversal. Already thoughtful people, such as anthropologists Mary Douglas and Victor Turner, historians such as Paul Johnson, sociologists such as Peter Berger and Richard Neuhaus, and political scientists and educators such as Allan Bloom have begun to diagnose and delineate many of the follies whose results we have embraced in recent years. Their work counsels us in the church that we need to regain our nerve, recover our sense of purpose, relearn our story, sharpen our minds, and get on with the business of being God’s people in Christ for the life of the world. I am almost afraid to say so, but what you or I think about aid to the Contras, the sex of the minister, or what some curial official thinks of this or that theologian is not really central to this business, nor does it teach us much about being God’s people for the life of the world.

But the astonishing Gospel of Jesus Christ does, especially when we encounter that Gospel upending and taking hold on people’s lives as they come, by God’s grace and our own faithful care and example, to font and holy table. At that table we discover, anew with them, the source of all things, bearing the terrible wounds we inflicted on him, to be sitting with us as among friends. It may well be that only in initiating such people will we be able to rediscover our own ecclesial selves.

This is what the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is all about. This is why it must not be allowed to fail. This is the way it bears my hope and, I cannot doubt, yours.
The Font Still Leaks a Little

BY RITA FERRONE

Take a brisk walk with me through the two years or so of liturgy that comprise a complete cycle of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. The scene is the parish on Long Island where I was director of liturgy and a catechumenate team member for the past three years. It is a parish of ten thousand families, suburban, middle class, conservative, and gradually coming alive to the potential of the RCIA for its life and mission. I want to give you the flavor of our experience, especially in the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens/Welcoming of Candidates, but for the most part I have had to be content with doing little more than naming things here. The picture may be somewhat idealized, but the real world is always with us: the parish’s font still leaks a little. Our process may not be perfect, but something wonderful happens.

Parishioners gossiped about what the Gospel sounded like to people who had never heard it before.

A lot had already happened before we got our catechumens to the church doors. During the previous spring, the catechumenate team had recruited parishioners to serve as “welcomers” for the inquirers who would gather that fall. These parishioners met during the summer to learn their part in the process.

Inquirers were directed to us by word of mouth, mailed invitations, public announcements, and happenstance. Some came alone, some with companions, and a team member interviewed each one. In September we began to meet as a group: inquirers, companions, welcomers, and the team.

Our welcomers each recruited other parishioners to pray for the inquirers, thus involving more people, including shut-ins and children. The catechumenate was still relatively new in the parish, but gradually more and more people in our assembly could say, “Yes, I know about those catechumens. I prayed for them; I wrote them a letter last Easter. Or, “I sponsored,” “I taught,” “I learned from them. I always see them at church. I’ve taken part in the rites, and I loved it!” Still more parishioners were plugged into the parish grapevine, and as the group’s spirit continued to grow, these parishioners indulged in a little “pastoral gossip” about what the Gospel sounds like to people who have never heard it before.

The date we originally scheduled for the celebration of the Rite of Acceptance came and went; the inquirers were not ready. But by Christmas it became clear that two were ready to celebrate the rite, so we scheduled it for the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. We publicized the event in the bulletin and spoken announcements, prepared the liturgy and music, worked with the inquirers on their part in the ceremony, rehearsed the chosen sponsors, and personally invited everyone we could think of, especially the people who had been praying for the past four months that this day would come.

The Rite of Acceptance did not just happen; it rode on the crest of a wave of parish support that had begun swelling eight months before.

A Day of Acceptance

The day came; the church was full. The inquirers stood at the doors, nervous. Their sponsors had been instructed to hold onto them for moral support (and to discourage last-minute defections); they carried out this unusual gesture with aplomb. The inquirers had been inside the church building before, of course, but now they were standing on the threshold of a new way of life. Today they would vow their intention to become disciples of Jesus Christ and full members of his body, the church—no mean accomplishment. Here, before the gathered community, they would change from private believers in the cross to public witnesses of its saving power. Today the church would honor their intention by tracing the sign of the cross on their foreheads, ears, eyes, and shoulders and by pressing the Scriptures into their hands.
“Happy those who hear the word of God…” The presider invited everyone to come to the back of the church. People hesitated: Did he mean it? They had never done this before. Even the people who knew well what was happening froze, and no one wanted to take the first step. Would we plow ahead with just the ministers, the choir, and a few stragglers gathered around? “Ask them again,” I proposed in a stage whisper to the presider. He did, in an informal way this time, and they came, pouring down the aisles, filling the back of the church, surrounding the inquirers and their sponsors, encircling them and pressing in on them, the children sneaking in front to see, while those who couldn’t join us turned around in their pews.

A crisp dialogue began with the giving of their names and the question, “What do you ask of the church?” Their responses came in their own words, brief, spoken clearly, well miked. Then, “What does this offer you?” “Eternal life.” Each was enjoined to follow the way of the Gospel and asked if they were ready to do this. At each “Yes” the assembly sang an acclamation of joy. The singing with the cross followed, punctuated by sung acclamations. This signing of the senses, shoulders, breast, hands, and feet is undoubtedly the most impressive part of the ceremony.

All of this takes only a few minutes, yet it is, in effect, a summary of these individuals’ courtship with Christ and the church leading up to this moment. They came to the church; a supportive community surrounded them. They told us who they are and what they are looking for; we responded with the invitation to follow the way of the Gospel, which leads to the cross and newness of life. Then they joined us to hear the word that will inform the rest of their lives.

It was wonderful to see the attention of all those gathered around and the wonder in the congregation’s faces as the dialogue unfolded. The people making these promises were strangers, their histories unique, their decision personal; but the movements of faith were familiar. Played out in these new faces, they touched us to the core.

After hearing the word proclaimed and preached, the new catechumen and candidate stepped forward, faced the congregation, and were presented with an open book of the Scriptures by their sponsors. We prayed a litany of intercession for them, and at the closing prayer of the intercessions, the presider extended his hands and invited the congregation to do the same. Other catechumens and candidates joined the new members of their group and were dismissed with them to reflect on the word they had just heard.

**Getting to Know You**

A lot would happen to this catechumen and candidate in the months and years ahead. During the catechumenate period they would become well known to the assembly, as they appeared Sunday after Sunday to be gracefully dismissed after the liturgy of the word. They would experience with the rest of the church the rhythms of the liturgical year, the changes of seasons, the feasts and fasts. With sponsors, catechists, and the example of the community to guide them, they would explore and appropriate the riches of the Catholic tradition. The word would dwell in them more and more as they heard the lectionary readings proclaimed and preached and used as the basis for their catechesis.
Hands would be imposed on them in blessing, and prayers of exorcism would purify and free them. They would be strengthened with the oil of catechumens, and the church would solemnly present to them the creed and the Lord’s Prayer.

In a long catechumenate, first fervor wears down a bit, and patience and determination come into play. Relationships are tested as people change before our eyes and we change with them. Limitations emerge, and we learn to bear with them. By the time that the Sunday assembly hears the sponsors’ testimony that these people are ready for election, there are no stars in anyone’s eyes, though there might be some tears of happiness.

Election marks a turning point in the catechumenate. From now on the elect to be initiated and the candidates to be received at Easter enter the desert of Lent with Christ and the church. Prayers of penitence for the candidates (on the Second Sunday of Lent) and the Scrutinies for the elect (on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays) underscore the theme of conversion. We adapt these texts to speak to the actual struggles of these particular elect and candidates. The language of ritual gesture speaks for itself: Bowing or kneeling to receive the imposition of hands signifies the need for God’s help and our confidence in God’s mercy.

Finally we come to the Easter Vigil. The pouring of water, the white garments, the candles, the fragrant chrism all speak of the new creation that these neophytes are in Christ. As they bring the bread and wine to the altar and receive communion for the first time, they show the assembly that the whole journey of faith reaches its climax at the eucharistic table.

Mystagogical catechesis, centering on the sacraments, continues from Easter to Pentecost, as the neophytes celebrate the eucharist and continue to deepen their experience of God’s grace. Easter to Pentecost is mostly a “high” time, while the periodic meetings following Pentecost will take into account the long-term “lows” of life in the church, now that the neophyte is no longer in the womb of the catechumenate community.

Judging by Experience

This is the full cycle of the catechumenate in brief compression. The shape of the rite can vary from year to year, depending on the status of the people being initiated. In fact, the whole calendar can be altered for a serious reason, but the logic remains the same. Here are some observations from my experience.

Numbers don’t matter. At least in a certain sense. The rite can be celebrated as well for two as for twenty-two. The choreography will be different, but the spirit will be the same. In fact, while large numbers are exciting, people are often very touched by the lone catechumen or the one candidate whose passage they are celebrating. God builds the kingdom one individual at a time. It’s a fair guess that our congregations understand this better than busy church professionals do. I’ve learned it through listening to people in inquiry sessions choose the parable of the lost sheep as their all-time favorite. The Lord we follow is a shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine to search for the one.

Sensitive adaptations enrich everybody’s experience. The rite is not a procrustean bed for liturgy planners and parishes, but its demands should not be taken lightly. Some adaptations that have worked well for us include sung acclamations and the practice of inviting the whole congregation to extend their hands in prayer. On the other hand, we took pains to distinguish between catechumens and candidates—this practice added complications, but it honed some very fundamental values about baptism in the other Christian churches.

Interdependence makes the process catch fire. In the RCIA catechesis, liturgy, and the rest of parish life are completely interdependent. This confluence of good parish life, especially good liturgy and catechesis, is what brings the RCIA to life.

The longer I use the rite, the more I trust it. Like many people, I began by expecting that the road to adult initiation was all uphill and that many adaptations would have to be made if anyone ever expected to use this new rite. I have found the contrary to be true. Instead of scaling down the rite to meet my expectations, I’ve had to keep scaling my expectations up to meet the rite and the reality of conversion. The rite works; it hangs together. It makes even better sense in practice than it does on paper.
Learning to Pray by Singing

BY STEVEN P. WALTER

In liturgical prayer our voices are one with the voice of Jesus Christ, and it is his hymn that we sing. That image, drawn from the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (#83), helps us understand the vital role of the hymns, acclamations, and songs we sing when we celebrate the liturgy. Here is what the Second Vatican Council said:

Christ Jesus, High Priest of the new and eternal covenant, taking human nature, introduced into this earthly exile the hymn that is sung throughout all ages in the halls of heaven. He joins the entire human community to himself, associating it with his own singing of the canticle of divine praise.

When we consider the catechetical role of music in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, and indeed in any liturgical celebration, we do well to remember that the liturgy is first and foremost the action of Christ, the prayer of Christ. In the sacraments of initiation we are introduced into Christ’s hymn, and it is Christ’s hymn that we join in singing.

The RCIA is more that a collection of rites to be used when initiating adults. It involves various aspects of formation and information, which are celebrated in the appropriate intervals by those rites. Because of the gradual and multifaceted nature of adult initiation, the relationship between worship and the development of faith cannot be broken. The often-quoted maxim, “Lex orandi, lex credendi,” teaches us that the way we pray the liturgy expresses what we must believe; and what we must believe determines our manner of prayer. As a catechist, then, the liturgy is a subtle teacher. It teaches by conforming us to Christ, immersing us in his hymn of praise and surrender to God.

Sharing the Light of Faith: The National Catechetical Directory for Catholics in the United States speaks of catechesis as that which makes “a person’s faith become living, conscious and active through the light of instruction” (#32). The full, conscious, and active participation in the liturgy called for by the Second Vatican Council and the “living, conscious and active” faith produced by catechesis both have as their goal persons who live out the gospel.

Catechesis can never be limited to the mere collecting of facts and information; it must always lead to living the Christian life. Worship can never be limited to the moment of praise and thanks in community, but must always lead to the mission of living in the Christ whom we have encountered in our worship. We do not begin by asking how we might adapt the liturgy to our needs and our current life situation, but rather by seeing how the liturgy calls us to conform our lives to the Christ encountered in worship.

In terms of catechesis, then, the hymns and ritual music of adult initiation are extremely important. They are not chosen merely as didactic tools to reinforce some significant fact that the catechumens have “learned” this past week. Rather the music and the text allow us, catechumens and fully initiated, to enter the mystery of Christ and to be taught the new hymn of our salvation.

Teaching the “New Hymn”

It is important that the catechumens not learn to sing this “hymn” in isolation, in meetings or sessions apart from the community. The major celebration of the stages of initiation, such as the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens, the Rite of Election, the Scrutinies, and the Easter Vigil, are all part of the regular rhythm of the parish’s Sunday worship. Within that worship, the normal complement of singing in the liturgy of the word—entrance hymn, penitential rite, responsorial psalm, and gospel acclamation—is presumed. Thus the parish’s normal repertoire of hymns and chants will communicate (for better or worse) the faith we profess and the vision of the church that we possess. Through its music the parish will serve as a strong teacher of the “new hymn” being learned by the catechumens.

Because of the variety of persons gathered, catechumens and faithful, with a multitude of life experiences among them, it is impossible to predict how each will hear the combined texts and tunes of the rites on a given day. But the goal of the music is to call catechumens and faithful alike to conversion of heart. This will happen differently at different times in the lives of people throughout the liturgical year.

A Catechetical Repertoire

The hymns and texts chosen for the parish’s initiation celebrations will form the nucleus of the catechumens’ memories of their first encounter with the church. The
texts and tunes must be of the highest quality, truly memorable, and continually calling God’s people to join in the hymn of all creation.

How sad it would be if, in the years to come, our catechumens look back and find only shallow or mediocre texts and music to remember. How firm a foundation would have been laid, then, in God’s excellent word? Or what of those who are already fully initiated, who participate in these rites and are called to remember their own initiation and continue their conversion? Can they sing with full heart and voice, with joy and thanksgiving as well as a bit of fear and trembling at the change of life and heart that this faith brings with it? Or will the fare laid before them cause them to encounter only the trite, the commonplace, and the mediocre, and thereby fail to call them to faith and conversion?

These are catechetical questions that deal with issues more subtle and more lasting, perhaps, than any textbook or lecture may confront. The liturgy is the school for catechumens and the fully initiated as they sing its texts and music week by week and year by year. The rites of adult initiation, and indeed all liturgy, demand that we strive for the excellence and beauty that is able to bear the weight of the mystery of faith.

Well-chosen texts and music, used year by year, can serve all by their familiarity and the memories that they evoke for the entire congregation. The freshness in such repertoire is supplied by our life experience since we last heard that particular text or tune and not necessarily by an entirely new text or musical setting.

The choices of initiation music made by the pastoral musician will be based on the particular rite being celebrated and its place in the liturgical year. Does the music serve the ritual moment? Does the text convey the same idea that the church wishes to convey in this rite?

The places in the rite at which specific suggestions for psalms and refrains are made should be taken seriously. Well-chosen music will speak to the entire assembly. A song that produces “an emotional response” is not what we are looking for here, but rather one that serves the mystery of the ritual moment.

It will be important, then, for the parish to build a solid repertoire of liturgical music for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. Music that serves the rite and respects the variety of the rite’s demands must be collected and used well. Because these rites appeal to our various senses, it will be important that acclamations, refrains, ostinato responses, and the like be chosen to allow visual participation in the rites by all present.

The impact of the music and these rites must not be limited or judged on a “one-time” basis; the experience of conversion and initiation is ongoing. Good ritual and good music will insure that the hymn sung by Christ and echoing throughout the halls of heaven echoes also in the hearts and on the lips of believers.

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Liturgy and catechesis both have as their goal persons who live out the gospel.
Roundelay

BY FRED MOLECK

In honor of our two-issue series on adult initiation, Dr. Moleck has provided a two-issue Roundelay. This column continues the one in the December-January issue. When last we left our hero, Lajmarg was in midstream among the soggy catechumen, screaming, "Who gets initiated, and how old are they?"

The Editor

Lajmarg, the primal screamer in the pre-apostolic baptismal liturgy described in last issue's "Roundelay," takes on unusual importance in the subsequent development of the ancient R(pre-C)IA. It seems that, after John's demise, the leadership fell on the shoulders of Lajmarg, since he knew the rite so well. In fact, the minuscule fragment manuscript in which he is identified describes at great length his influence in spreading the rite as the Brigitines knew it on both banks of the Jordan River.

What is quite clear in the description of him and his team is the strong collaborative ministry they enjoyed both at the River and away from the River. Known to each other as the Mystagogical Swat Team and Dunkers, this small tribe of zealots developed strong recruiting techniques to increase the ranks of candidates for baptism. Not much is known about these techniques other than that their inquiry text ended with a peculiar colloquialism roughly translated as "… or else."

The team grew in numbers, but at the same time, Lajmarg wasn't getting any younger. It was time to institutionalize the R(pre-C)IA and develop some type of program—or process—that would protect the rite's integrity and, at the same time, promulgate it throughout the known civilized world.

"Great!" interrupted Lajmarg the Twenty-Second. "But let me warn you about the water."

After much deliberation and incantation, an absolutely brilliant solution was proffered by Lajmarg the Sixtieth (the original Lajmarg chose one of the candidates at each dunking to carry on his name). "Say gang," Lajmarg #60 proposed, "how about some of us break off into teams of three or four members, develop a curriculum, travel northwards and southwards, and give lectures and demonstrations on how the rite is to be done? Whaddayathink?"

"Terifft!" exclaimed Lajmarg the Forty-Fifth. "We already have a network of neophytes up and down the West Bank, and I have several cousins up north who would be happy to take care of us. They could arrange to have some folks meet us and inquire what we're about when we arrive, and then we could share and tell them about our journey…"

"Great," interrupted Lajmarg the Twenty-Second. "But let me warn you about the water. It's just awful anywhere north of here. Take your own, and carry your own matzo, too."

"Good point," Lajmarg the Sixtieth assured them. He continued, "Now, we need to call the program something. This type of exchange and storytelling is so similar to what I saw in Rome when I attended the Essene Congress last Saturday. All of the Roman officials would gather periodically in the middle of this big parking lot and talk. They called it "The Forum."

"'Forum' sounds too Roman," interjected Lajmarg the Thirty-Second. "We don't want to localize the program with any power center...at least, not yet. How about... How about... 'Arena'? Yes, how about 'Arena'?"

"Sounds good," shouted Lajmarg the Sixtieth, "but let's expand it to at least four words, rather than just 'Arena.'" Since we're targeting the people north of here, how about 'The North Samarian Arena for the Pre-Christian Initiation of Adults'?

"Not just adults, but children, too," added Lajmarg the One Hundred and Sixth, the youngest team member.

"That's it! "The North Samarian RPCIA and Small Children Society," summarized Lajmarg the Sixtieth. "We're on to something big!"

"We'll need some type of distinctive clothing for the team," observed Lajmarg the Forty-Ninth, "so the folks will know that we are Pre-Christians not only by our love, but by our garb..." She continued, "My aunt has this chi-chi garment shop in Ophir, and she's designed a new vesture for the Queen. It wouldn't take much to adapt it to our needs. I suggest gold lamé. I just wanted to share that with all of you."

Lajmarg knew how to control a crowd.

At that moment the room suddenly warmed. All conversation ceased. All heads turned to the door. Lajmarg—the original and most primal screamer of them all—moved slowly into their company. The ambience broadened into high mysticism. He seated himself at the smoldering fire and scanned the room with half-opened eyes. His lower lip sagged a little; he cleared his throat and brushed the tangled hair back from his left eye. (Lajmarg knew how to control a crowd.) Slowly raising one hand in Aaronic benediction while the fire's glow created a halo of the supernatural behind him, he finally spoke in one ear-splitting scream, "GO FOR IT!"

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Hymns for praise

While recently attending the Shrewsbury Diocesan Assembly, a lively event offering many kinds of stimulus and food for thought, I was surprised by exhilaration at the quality of the hymns, brilliantly led and accompanied by Fr. Ernest Sands. The maestro himself told me that they, and many more like them, came from the St. Thomas More Centre, now based in Hendon, and though my ignorance of its musical development, as distinct from its liturgical publications, reveals a serious malfunction in the periscope, I can think of no better reparation than to blow a fanfare in honour of such a hive of virtue.

The hymns of my youth evoked an atmosphere of moleskin trousers, damp shawls and poke bonnets. Unlike the enviably timeless quality of the Wesley brothers’ hymns, and of Anglican Victorian hymnody which has also stood the test of time, they reflected the outlook of Victorian Catholics so faithfully that to sing them with conviction one needed to be carried backwards in a time-machine.

Though we loftily dismissed all competitors’ efforts as heretical, they were in fact theologically, lyrically and melodically vastly superior. Our own were strong on devotion, emotion, not to say sentimentality, and sometimes seemed to be bullying congregations into feelings which could not be expressed with real conviction. Their heavy stress on a sense of wretchedness and anxiety bordering on despair no doubt appealed to poverty-stricken Victorian Catholics, but it made them poor travellers, and created a sense of embarrassment like an elderly singer rendering “Trumpeter What Are You Sounding Now” or “Come Into The Garden, Maud!”

The attempt to produce contemporary English hymns and chants since Vatican II has not, on the whole, been much of an improvement. The best work, like the Gelineaux and Taizé chants, has been imported. The native product has too often been like cheap carpet, with some immediate appeal but not hard-wearing. Poppity (I nearly said Popish) tunes, lines that do not scan, a rather desperate “poetry” that frequently slides into bathos or banality, vaguely religious sentiments that vaporise on close inspection, the misapprehension that paraphrasing the Gospel or lopping its text into arbitrary lengths automatically makes a worthy hymn, are common failings. Few stand up to half-a-dozen hearings though we often must endure ten times as many.

Well so I thought, in my generous, charitable way. And now comes this revelation. A whole body of splendid work nurtured in the St. Thomas More Centre founded by the late Fr. Harold Winstone in 1969 to promote pastoral liturgy in the Westminster diocese. The present director is Fr. Michael Shaw, and since 1976 Paul Inwood has developed the musical side, bringing together liturgical music, both native and imported, of great variety and quality. There is a core group of six composers, and more recently a relationship has been struck up with Oregon Catholic Press in the United States, which has not only provided greater resources for recordings and publications but encouraged transatlantic cross-fertilisation in the field of liturgical music. Some fine hymns by American composers like Marty Haugen and Michael Lynch have made their mark here, and English liturgical music is enjoying a warm welcome in the States.

The music all comes from people engaged in pastoral activity, and the composers’ group meets regularly to discuss in considerable depth the relation between liturgy and music and to make sure they are genuinely meeting pastoral needs. This alertness to what is possible as well as desirable in parishes and schools shows up in the background notes to the published music which suggest a number of adaptations to meet the variety of resources available between one place and another. What is common to all the centre’s output — and I have listened to a good deal of it over the past few days — is vigour, freshness and subtlety, a fine sense of melody and a genuine theological content. Whether jubilant, reflective, plangent or boisterous, these are hymns that not only invite singing but also prayerful singing, people’s hymns with real music and lyrical quality. They are modern without being modish, popular without being populist. To my mind they signal a real break-through in Catholic liturgy.

It would be wrong to imply that the centre is just a hymn factory. In fact, it covers the whole range of liturgical music. Next year, after two dress rehearsals in England, California will hear the first performance of an hour-long prayer-concert on the theme of Sacrament and a Music Book to accompany the new rite for the Christian initiation of adults which is also in the works. For those who find the aesthetics of modern liturgy wanting, clearly better things are on the way.

—John F. X. Harriott

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The sacramental structure emerges when things begin to speak and human beings begin to hear their voices. On the frontpiece of this structure is inscribed the phrase: all of reality is but a sign. A sign of what? Of another reality, a Reality that founds and grounds all things: God.

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Calendar

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
WASHINGTON
February 2-4
Contemporary Black American Congregational Song and Worship Traditions: A Conference Presented by the National Museum of American History Program in Black American Culture (Smithsonian Institution). The conference will examine the oral tradition of hymnody and spiritual song through "Song Services" presented by members of one of five congregational groups. A panel of scholars and experts will then discuss the repertoire and performance traditions presented. Write: Program in Black American Culture, Room 1015A, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560. Or call John Archambeault or Michelle Lanchester: (202) 357-4176.

Sponsored by the Georgetown Center for Liturgy, Spirituality and the Arts. Write: Georgetown Center for Liturgy, Spirituality and the Arts, 3513 N Street, NW, Washington, DC 20007. (202) 687-4420.

ILLINOIS
CHICAGO
March 4
Cantor Conference, 9:00 A.M.-4:30 P.M. Not directed at the beginning cantor. Facilitators include: Sr. Dodie Dwight, Mike Hay, Denise LaGiglia, Rev. Mike Simonini. Sponsored by the Chicago Office for Divine Worship. For location and other information, write: Office for Divine Worship, 1800 N. Hermitage Avenue, Chicago, IL 60622-1101.

June 17-July 15
Summer program in Eastern Christian theology, liturgy, and spirituality. Program to be pursued at an Eastern Catholic monastery in northern California. Sponsored by the Catholic Theological Union, Chicago. Write: Rev. Andry Chirovsky, Sheptytsky Institute at Mt. Tabor, Catholic Theological Union, 5401 S. Cornell Avenue, Chicago, IL 60615. (312) 991-0820.

ROSEMONT
February 24-26
Great Lakes Pastoral Ministry Gathering. Sponsored by E.L.I. Associates and coordinated by Conference Services by Loretta Reif. Theme: The Adult Church—Experiences and Challenges for the '90s. Place: Holiday Inn O'Hare Kennedy, Rosemont, IL. Write: The Gathering, PO Box 5226, Rockford, IL 61125. (815) 399-2140.

KENTUCKY
LEXINGTON
February 23-25

MINNESOTA
ST. PAUL
May 27-28

What makes something a sacrament? . . . It is living familiarly and intimately with things that creates and recreates them symbolically. It is the time we spend with them, the taming of them, the insertion of them into our own experience that humanizes them and makes them speak the language of human beings. Sacraments reveal a way of thinking that is typically human.

Leonardo Boff
Sacraments of Life,
Life of the Sacraments

NEW JERSEY
PRINCETON
March 24
Presentation of The Crucifixion by Sir John Stainer, performed by the Seminary Singers and Chapel Choir, Princeton Theological Seminary, at 8:00 P.M. Site: Miller Chapel, Princeton Theological Seminary. Free of charge. Write: Musical Offerings at Princeton Theological Seminary, CN 821, Princeton, NJ 08540.

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STEVENS POINT
May 8-9

Please send information for Calendar to: Rev. Lawrence Heiman, C.P.P.S., Rensselaer Program of Church Music and Liturgy, Saint Joseph's College, PO Box 815, Rensselaer, IN 47978.
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Isaiah 9:2

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Reviews

Books

Resources relating to the RCIA have been proliferating ever since it started to become clear that the rite was more than a passing program of parish renewal. Sorting through the wheat and the chaff can be a bit overwhelming at first. In this review essay, Dolores Martinez guides us through several resources in English and Spanish.

Dolores is the Pastoral Associate for Liturgy and Music at St. Austin Church, Austin, TX. She is completing a degree in fine arts at Texas Tech University, and she leads workshops in Hispanic music for Oregon Catholic Press. In addition, Dolores serves as a liturgist and musician for institutes of the North American Forum on the Catechumenate.

Paul F. X. Covino

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults: Study Edition


This book should be read and studied with extreme care by every pastoral musician charged with leading the community of believers in their musical participation in the rites. Not one section should be skipped as irrelevant, for it is only in reading the entire rite that its full impact will be understood, and that impact should be grasped before any adaptations to local circumstances are made.

Part I presents the entire initiation process, taking the reader through evangelization, the precatechumenate, acceptance into the order of catechumens (with its optional rites), the period of the catechumenate with its proper rites, the election or enrollment of names, the period of purification and enlightenment with its rites, the celebration of the sacraments of initiation, and the period of postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy.

Part II contains adapted rites for particular circumstances: the Christian initiation of children who have reached catechetical age, initiation of adults in exceptional circumstances, initiation of a person in danger of death, the preparation of uncatechized adults for confirmation and the eucharist, and the reception of baptized Christians into the full communion of the Catholic Church. Three appendices round out this text: additional (combined) rites; texts for acclamations, hymns, and songs from ancient sources; and the National Statutes for the Catechumenate.

The three short pages of Appendix II can help the pastoral musician find texts set to music that are directly appropriate to the celebration of the rites. Some of these, in fact, have already received various settings (see Pastoral Music, 13:2 [December-January 1989]: 34-40).

The book's layout makes it easy to read and understand. The black and red type clearly separates ritual text from rubrics and other relevant instructions. The text of the rite is an invaluable resource to all persons involved in the liturgical celebrations of initiation.

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults: Liturgical Commentary

Michael McMahon. Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions. 1986. $10.95 to FDLC members (1-4 copies; further discounts on bulk orders); $11.95 to nonmembers.

This book does not follow the same arrangement as the rite itself. It is divided into nine parts, with additional suggestions at the end for further reading and for music in the rites.

The layout of each section of this book is interesting. For each part of the RCIA McMahon provides some historical background, then an in-depth exploration (through documentation) of each component, and finally a pastoral reflection. Excellent study questions end each section.

Pastoral musicians will find ample musical and liturgical suggestions woven through the entire text, and to skip one section may mean missing a good, concrete suggestion. Here is a general comment on the role of music in adult initiation:

Music is an integral part of each of the rites, and in many cases provides a key to the participation of the assembly in the celebration. Parish musicians need to understand the structure and the spirit of the rites, as well as the musical forms that are called for in each of them. Especially important are the acclamations that are sung at various times. Acclamatory settings are to be short, strong, and direct, and allow the assembly to participate easily. The rites also employ litanies, psalms, and hymns at various times.

Perhaps the most important variable in these rites consists of the candidates themselves. McMahon reminds us that "there is no substitute for personal acquaintance with the candidates." He stresses this personalization because "the rituals celebrate what is actually taking place in the faith experience of the candidates."

The concrete music suggestions in this book are very helpful to pastoral musicians. The pastoral reflections include suggestions about the type of music, its place, and its use in each rite, and at the end of the book the author provides suggestions for specific pieces of music and provides a list of publishers.

New Wine, New Wineskins


This short paperback is worth its weight in gold. Its subtitle describes its purpose: Pastoral Implications of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. The author helps us understand those implications by addressing these areas: a very brief history of Christian initiation; some assumptions about the process involved in the RCIA; pastoral suggestions for each of the four periods of adult initiation; and some implications of the RCIA for other dimensions of ministry. The pastoral tone permeates the book, and the language is concise and straightforward. Reading this book will convert anyone to a new way of seeing the role of the parish community in helping others 47
grow in faith. A foreword states that the RCIA addresses contemporary structures of catechesis, liturgy, and adult education. The area of liturgy and the role that music plays in the rite are the key areas of study for music ministers.

The short history of initiation (three and one-half pages) merely sets the context for the rest of the book. Questions placed after every couple of paragraphs, however, help us to see ourselves in relation to the catechumenal process. If we are serious about understanding adult initiation, Dunning suggests, we must probe deeply in ourselves for the honest answers that these questions demand.

In chapter two Dunning discusses assumptions that underlie the RCIA process, assumptions about persons, journeying, faith, God, Christ, the church, ministries, catechesis, and liturgy. In the section about journeying, he reminds us that “God is personal, Jesus is risen, and the Church is ‘we.’” He also stresses here that adaptation is important, but it must be creative, not restrictive.

Discussing church and ministries, Dunning stresses that the basic model of the church in the RCIA is the church as a community. This model has important implications for musicians when choosing music that draws the community into the heart of the rites celebrated in its midst. Involvement in liturgy means being at the heart of the celebration, not outside it.

In chapters three to six the author explores the four periods of the RCIA and asks three basic questions about each period: Who are the journeys during this period? Who are the ministers (in a broad sense of the word)? And what are the catechesis and liturgies? Although Dunning does not go into specifics about the rites here, a musician can get a general idea of the liturgical celebrations for each period by referring to the liturgy sections (not to the exclusion of the other sections, of course).

Initiation and Conversion
Lawrence J. Johnson, ed. The Liturgical Press. 1985. 94 pages. $4.95.


Readers will not find a step-by-step instruction on the rites or a complete outline of the catechumenate. Rather, they will come to a new understanding of the theology and philosophy that underlie the catechumenate. A music minister new to the field might need to have a good theological dictionary handy, since the four writers use technical language not in everyday vocabulary. Here I want to highlight ideas from the four writers that are important for music ministers and all liturgists.

Regis Duffy asks, “When there are self-serving notions and praxis of conversion in the Christian community, how is liturgy a help or a hindrance toward greater honesty?” Again, “Is liturgy an accurate measure of and challenge to conversion in the community?” He claims that the local community has a responsibility to make liturgy a door to such honesty and conversion:

The local Christian community has a responsibility to enable its members to participate in the task of hearing anew
and proclaiming the gospel message... A 'knowing, active, and fruitful' liturgy... indicates the converted attitudes, values, and meanings that permit us to praise the unearned graciousness of God's saving work among us. Worship and liturgy are symbolic actions that reveal and clarify meanings.

Barbara O'Dea notes the down side of symbolic actions when she discusses the probable cause for our distorted self-concept as American Catholics:

Liturgies intended to transform us through encounter with God often prevent it. Too many empty rituals placate our sense of obligation to worship God while at the same time shielding us from any more reality than we care to acknowledge. Still the ritual itself survives—repeated weekly and even daily in our churches.

We need to understand the conversion process because, she says, quoting Mark Searle, "Every liturgical celebration of the Church... is an attempt to facilitate the experience of conversion by ritualizing it... Every sacrament is a rite of passage..." Because the RCIA focuses us on conversion, it will require of us "dramatic changes in outlook and praxis."

Like most of the writers here, O'Dea pleads for a new understanding of liturgy's role, and therefore of the role of liturgists and musicians:

Liturgists, lead us on our inward journey. Open to us the formative myths that are the very heart of our reality as Church. Help us to realize how the Exodus and the Paschal Mystery continue to answer symbolically the great questions of the human condition—questions of life and death, of suffering, of God, and of the meaning of the world. Only then can we discover meaning in them and live out of them on our life journey.

James Shaughnessy's talk raises some more general questions that pastoral musicians need to consider. "How do we conceive of the Church?" he asks, and, "How do we relate to Christ?" The answers to these questions, he suggests, take root best in an experience of wholeness, expressed especially in the task of building community:

It is in the area of community building that the concept of wholeness becomes most evident. All our attitudes, efforts, the way we pray and worship, preach and instruct, the way we approach people, the way we care and respond to their needs, as well as every other aspect of our witness and mission should keep this concept of wholeness in the forefront of all planning and activities.

Responding to claims that lay people are uninvolved, distracted, and bored, he asks, "What better way to elicit their active participation than to engage them in deeper and more demanding ministry on behalf of the total community at prayer?" Such involvement, he believes, will produce "a more informed and involved congregation, create better worship, and rescue our people from the Lord's Day blathes." We need to move away from the "mechanic" or "craft" stage, beyond "show me how to do it."

James Lopresti, finally, looks at institutional conversion as essential to liturgy. "Worship is not something which happens whether or not the people are there," he reminds us. "Worship
is the people at prayer ... It is a corporate prayer in which the ‘we’ precedes the ‘I’.

One test of institutional conversion is our ability to recognize the one bread and the one body, “finding as much real presence in one another as in the Word and the bread and the cup. And above all, active participation means recognizing in the broken bread the surprising crucified one ... alive in our assembly. He is the one who makes it possible for us to be active participants in a pilgrim way of common life.”

Such questions and comments point a microscope at our music ministry and its integral role in the process of conversion. Does our music promote participation? Does it speak justly? Does it challenge us to ministry in a direct way? Does our singing place the “we” before the “I”? Does it speak the presence of Christ in one another or describe a distant God enthroned in heaven?

This book helps us to probe the philosophical, theological, and ecclesiological understandings that precede and undergird our ministerial actions, helping us to avoid the empty “how-tos” of ministry that are not supported by our first being converted ourselves, before we try to help others on the journey.

Materials in Spanish

Persons ministering in a Hispanic community may find it necessary or desirable to find materials that address adult initiation in Spanish. The materials available in this country are not extensive; most of them come from Spain or Mexico.

A place to start is with the ritual in Spanish: Ritual de la Iniciacion de Adultos (Madrid: Comision Episcopal de Liturgia, 1976). It is interesting to study this Spanish text alongside the final English edition of the rite, for the Spanish ritual does not make specific reference to musical acclamations, psalms, hymns, or litanies, except for the litany preceding baptism at the Easter Vigil. It would be of great benefit for communities that celebrate the rites of initiation in Spanish to have a study text to accompany the ritual book or a commentary like Michael McMahon’s. Also, the musical resources from which to draw specific musical selections have yet to be developed in Spanish.

One book in Spanish that may be of help in presenting a broader understanding of adult Catholic faith is the Nuevo Catéctico Catolico: Creer—Vivir—Obrar (Barcelona: Editorial Herder, 1986, 310 pages). This catechism is translated, revised, and adapted from one published by the German Episcopal Conference in 1970. It is a very comprehensive adult catechism, easy to read and study, although the print is rather small. Each catechetical point is accompanied by a scriptural passage and questions for study and discussion. In addition to the Bible, quoted sources include Vatican II, St. Augustine, Pope John XXIII, and Thomas Aquinas.

Here are some other titles in Spanish worth investigating: Dionisio Borobio, Proyecto de Iniciación Cristiana: Como Se Hace un Cristiano, Como Se Renueva una Comunidad (Bilbao: Desclee, 1980); Catequesis de Adultos: Tomo 1, Material de Iniciación; Tomo 2, Catequesis Básica (Madrid, 1979); Secretariado diocesano de catequesis (Madrid), De la Cristiandad a la Comunidad (Madrid: Ediciones Paulinas, 1977); and also from the Secretariado diocesano de catequesis (Madrid), Elpas de un Caminar (Madrid: Ediciones Paulinas, 1977).
The Last, Best Hope

BY TOM CONRY

The importance of the RCIA (and thus of the ritual music associated with it) is simply this: It is the last, best hope that the promise and vision of Vatican II will ever come to pass.

I believe that if we allow the RCIA to work in our parishes (by which I mean if we allow it to disrupt our parish routine, if we enter into the process of conversion outlined in the rites, if we don’t subject it to the death-of-a-thousand-cuts with which we have carved up the rest of our ritual), then the church will be irreversibly renewed. If we walk away from this opportunity by watering this rite down, adapting it to our petty ritual pathologies, then I don’t see anything else on the horizon that will take its place. Barring some new and unforeseen initiative of grace, we will have to settle for a liturgy pretty much as it is: an immature and undeveloped ritual whose initial growth was stifled by an omnipotent popular culture of narcissism and therapy-worship.

If we remember that the dreams of the Council were our dreams, then hope remains for us all.

So the moment lies largely in our hands. We musicians and liturgists have it in our power to turn the lathe that may shape the new church. Or not.

It is now unmistakable that what was promised in the Council has been only partially fulfilled, and progress toward those promises has been more or less arrested. It has been arrested by our own overwhelming milieu of American romantic individualism (critiqued admirably by Robert N. Bellah and others in Habits of the Heart) and—let’s be honest here!—by a few whose interests are served by stalling that progress.

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults can go a long way, I believe, toward overcoming these difficulties, if it is implemented in a reasonable fashion. Unfortunately our track record on these matters is not unblemished. We are frighteningly adept at rationalizing our disease. We are the same people, for instance, who schedule five or seven Masses on a weekend, a great many of which are not filled, and then explain that we are “providing different worship experiences (!) to people with different needs.” (Try selling that one to Abraham, or Moses, or John the Baptist, I dare you.) We are the same people who order the hymnals, sing the songs, say the prayers, and do all the things that have led us to our present situation.

Tom Conry is a musician, clinician, composer, and author working in Portland, OR.
Recently Mark Searle wrote: “The experience of the RCIA is beginning to bring home to us...that understanding the liturgy is not a matter of simplified rites and intelligible explanations, but of conversion sustained by evangelization, catechesis, and ongoing enrichment in our grasp of the core mysteries of our religion...” But where will that conversion arise, be provoked, and find a voice, if not in our singing?

As of now, our singing is not up to such a burden. We sing mostly of Jesus and me, the comfort of Jesus, praising God, or something or another that is allegedly taking place or will take place beyond the sky. As long as this is our meat and drink, there can be no conversion; there can be only a reaffirmation of the assembly’s allegiance to things as they are.

With that kind of music and text as our ordinary praxis, we musicians can, perhaps, be forgiven if we are confused by a set of rituals whose purpose is so clearly to upset “things as they are,” to provoke a set of questions that are not ordinarily brought up at our genteel and insular Sunday Masses, questions like these:

What does it mean to live a life for others?
What does it mean to be called to the common table?
If grace is communal, must not sin likewise be a social reality?
If faith is a gift of God, is the assembly not God’s agent?
Is this assembly worth joining?

By now you may certainly be forgiven if you feel that I’ve overstated the case. Are we few musicians and liturgical types really so powerful as to make this kind of a difference? Are the stakes truly so high?

We human beings have such puny memories. Even now as I write this, twenty-five years to the day from the publication of Sacrosanctum Concilium, it’s an uphill climb to reach back and taste the hope, sorrow, fear, and possibilities of those days.

Consider. At that time Pope John XXIII had just died (June 3). A monk in Saigon, angry at U.S. cooperation with the oppression of Buddhists in his country, poured gasoline on himself and lit it in a blaze that shocked the world (June 13). A sniper killed Medgar Evers in Jackson, Mississippi (June 15). A quarter of a million peaceful demonstrators heard Martin Luther King, Jr., proclaim the rhetoric that moved a generation, “I have a dream” (August 28). President Kennedy signed a treaty to limit nuclear testing (October 7), and the world breathed a little easier. And Pope Paul VI appointed five women as delegates to the Second Vatican Council (November 2). And, of course, none of us alive then will forget where we were and what we were doing at the moment we heard that John Kennedy had been murdered (November 22).

These events are so far away from us now, they may as well have happened to someone else. We can scarcely imagine them befalling people like ourselves. We have been so long removed from any position of power in our church or our country (and all too often, even in our own lives), that experiences like these, shared experiences that shook and shaped a world, seem alien to us now. They have become quaint and aloof, and somehow naughty, as though we had become unworthy of our own past.

And yet, especially now in the midst of as politically depressing a moment for our church and our country as I can remember, it is important to remember the event that surrounded and informed the re-establishment of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. We need to recall those days for the same reason that black people, during their time “on the cross” of slavery needed to recall their heritage as free women and men. We need to recall that things were not always the way they are now and that this moment, too, shall pass away.

The point is that the forces of reaction—which do, in fact, exist—thrive on the myth of our powerlessness. As long as we are convinced that the cause of the Gospel is hopeless (really), then our role in this moment will continue to be merely that of victims. But if we remember that the dreams of the Council were our dreams, indeed that the Council itself was occasioned not by the sudden conversion of the Roman Curia but by the faithful labor and prayer of people like ourselves, people who believed that the church could become more like Jesus, more open, more true to its own nature—if we can hold on to this memory, then hope remains for us all.

Still, there are those who will try to pretend that there is no movement to undo the work of Vatican II. Let them talk to Matthew Fox. There are some who would try to sell us the fanciful story that the church as a worldwide institution still stands for openness, inclusion, dialogue, even as it did in those days. Let them meet Charles Curran. There are even a few who, at this very time and place, with straight faces and serious expressions, will maintain that nothing essential has been lost in this quarter-century; there are no witch hunts; the Constitution on the Church that promised a people of God “structured and governed with a wonderful diversity” is still respected. Let us introduce them to Edward Schillebeeckx, Hans Küng, Dan Maguire, Raymond Hunthausen, Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, Gustavo Gutierrez, Juan Segundo...the list is familiar and lengthy.

Let us be clear, then. The RCIA’s importance is that it may yet salvage from current attempts to bury it the desperate dreaming that became the Second Vatican Council. So we musicians must make a choice, as the rite itself proposes for us an inescapable question: Do we stand with the Conciliar revolution, or shall we acquiesce in its burial?


2. Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium), no. 32.
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