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On January 16, 1988, the Congregation for Divine Worship sent a "circular letter" to the presidents of episcopal conferences and the presidents of national liturgical commissions on "Preparing and Celebrating the Paschal Feasts." That circular letter was not widely distributed to parishes. The reason for this limited distribution may stem from the limited authority of the letter (cf. Huels) or from the unevenness of the recommendations as they apply to the United States.

Pastoral Music has invited a group of American experts in pastoral liturgy and music to comment on the document, reflecting on the good ideas, pointing out the limits, and if they desired, making suggestions for the future. Because of the nature of this type of letter (cf. Huels again), this issue of Pastoral Music is designed to be used along with our August-September 1989 issue [13:6] to assist you in preparing Lent, the triduum, Easter, and the Fifty Days.

The organization of the issue follows the document's chronological sequence:
6 Lent (Jenkins), Holy Week (Freburger).

The Easter Triduum (Power), Holy Thursday (Burke-Sullivan), Good Friday and Holy Saturday (Schoenbacher), the Easter Vigil (Brassard), Easter and the Fifty Days (Faucher).

Running throughout the issue is a mixed evaluation of the document, with one commentator chiding the author's authors for a school teacher's reprimanding tone correcting the misbehaving student (Burke-Sullivan), another approaching the document with a fear that it would be "restrictive and legalistic" but discovering that he agrees with the correction of abuses cited (Brassard), and yet another citing the poor translation into English (Freburger).

There is always a resistance to change in general and to change in ritual in particular. It is one of the dilemmas of our current reform. Ritual requires "knowing something in the bones" and we haven't had time to absorb it. In this document, some elements of the unrefomed rite (before 1958) are reiterated ... not because of any intrinsic reasoning, it seems, but because they are familiar ritual, while the new elements are not.

Another version of this same problem is the question: How do you educate in new liturgical reform? Almost every document repeats the need for education in liturgy, but care needs to be given to the educational style. A presider (or commentator, as recommended in this document) who is compelled to begin each element with "Now we are going to the ritual element named by which we (ritual element explained); so, let us (chorographic direction) destroy ritual and prayer. Not much better is the worship aid, which does the same in print, thereby keeping the faithful glued to the "aid" (which in this case is a missioner) (see Schoenbacher).

My suggestion, then, is to become familiar with the liturgical directives contained in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal and the RCA and then read this circular letter in the light of those instructions. Use this issue to reflect on the needs of your parish community for celebrating the great feasts that your community shares with the whole church.
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Cover: A new initiate receives a candle and a gift after her baptism during the Easter Vigil at St. Benedict Parish, Baltimore, MD. Photo courtesy of Denise Walker.

NPM Coming Attractions 1990

Schools

SCHOOLS FOR CANTORS AND LECTORS
July 2-6 . . . Rye Beach, NH
July 9-13 . . . Cleveland, OH
July 16-20 . . . St. Paul, MN
August 6-10 . Burlingame, CA

CHOIR DIRECTORS INSTITUTES
July 23-27 . . . Washington, DC*
July 30-Aug. 3 . . . San Diego, CA*

GUITAR SCHOOLS . . . PLUS!
July 9-13 . . . Rockford, IL
(Plus a liturgical dance school)
July 23-27 . . . Los Angeles, CA

ORGAN SCHOOLS
July 9-13 . . . Washington, DC*
July 23-27 . Alverno College, WI

NEW for 1990

REGIONAL CONVENTIONS

June 6-9 . . . Phoenix, Arizona
FOCUS: Music
FOCUS: Liturgy
August 1-4 . . . Washington, DC
FOCUS: Children

1990 CALENDAR

June 6-9 Regional Convention
Phoenix, AZ
June 27-30 Regional Convention
Chicago, IL
July 2-6 Cantor/Lector School
Rye Beach, NH
July 9-13 Cantor/Lector School
Cleveland, OH
July 9-13 Guitar School
Rockford, IL
Liturical Dance School
July 9-13 Organ School
Washington, DC
July 9-13* Gregorian Chant
Winooski, VT
July 16-20 Cantor/Lector School
St. Paul, MN
July 23-27* Choir Director Institute
Washington, DC
July 23-27 Guitar School
Los Angeles, CA
July 23-27 Organ School
Alverno College, WI
July 30-Aug. 3 Choir Director Institute
San Diego, CA
August 1-4 Regional Convention
Washington, DC
August 6-10 Cantor/Lector School
Burlingame, CA

GREGORIAN CHANT SCHOOL
July 9-13 . . . . Winooski, VT*

*Revised Dates

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Member News

Conventions Update: Two Special Panels, One Very Special Choir

Our usual Convention planning involves choosing one speaker to address one topic, but some topics require more “firepower” than a single speaker can muster. Such topics demand a variety of viewpoints in order to offer adequate treatment, and this year we find ourselves with such topics at two of our Regional Conventions.

The Phoenix Convention begins with such a wide-ranging topic: The Roots of Today’s Repertoire. We asked the major publishers to list their “best sellers”—their most popular pieces in the past ten years—and from their lists we constructed a kind of “top twenty” list of current liturgical repertoire. With Rev. Virgil Funk chairing the discussion, four well-known panelists will trace those compositions back to their roots, with a lot of enjoyable sing-along and listening fun. Frank Brownstead, Tom Conry, Rory Cooney, and Jim Hansen will lead participants in a rich, rewarding look at the past decade and help to sketch in our hopes for the future.

The Chicago Convention will save its panel discussion until our last full day together. On Friday, June 29, a select panel of church leaders and secular representatives will engage in open and frank dialogue about the place of liturgy in the modern world, how American society relates to liturgy, and what effect worship has on our society. The discussion, which uses the same title as the Convention—Liturgy in Dialogue with the World—is moderated by Rev. Edward Malloy, president of the University of Notre Dame.

No panel for the Washington, DC, Convention, but we do have a very special choir coming to that gathering. John Romeri is bringing the Children’s Choir from the Church of the Assumption, Bellevue, PA, to assist with music for the Convention eucharist. They will also be helping him with his workshops. We look forward to hearing their voices raised in God’s praise.

Convention Workshops: Opportunities Galore for Learning/Sharing

The largest block of time at any NPM Convention is set aside for workshops, because a lot of practical learning and application takes place in these sessions. Here attendees hone their own skills and find new repertoire and ideas to take back to their parishes and communities. Participants have a wide range of possibilities to choose from: workshops for beginners, intermediate, and advanced attendees; offerings that are of general interest and those designed for a specific group of ministers; workshops for musicians, clergy, lectors, religious educators, those who work with children, those who work in ethnic parishes; sessions for special concerns—women’s issues, peace and justice, art and environment.

This year’s three Regional Conventions are thematic, so they offer opportunities to examine specific topics in depth as well as giving first-time participants an introduction to the theme and to the general meaning of musical liturgy. In this issue we offer you an overview of some of the workshop highlights at the Regional Conventions.

For more information on the Conventions, write: NPM Regional Conventions, 225 Sheridan Street, NW, Washington, DC 20011-1492. Or call: (202) 723-5800.

Phoenix: Workshops Develop Our Craft, Transformation, Ministry

The general topic at Phoenix (June 6-9) is “The Ministry of Music in the Church in America.” Each day of the Convention is devoted to a special aspect of that theme, and the workshops for that day reflect the special focus.

Beginning on Thursday, the workshop sessions share the emphasis on “The Craft of the Liturgical Artist in America.” So we examine the musical artistry of the cantor, choir director, organist, ensemble musicians, guitarists, and other instrumentalists. We look at what computers can offer musicians, and at the importance of environment and acoustics.

We also offer opportunities to examine the liturgical craft of musicians through presentations on the structure of ritual prayer, planning, and the new Order of Christian Funerals. Other workshops look at the art of arranging and the special skills involved in liturgy with children.

Friday’s focus is conversion: “The Liturgical Artist’s Transforming Experience.” We offer a set of workshops that is repeated in the afternoon, to give people a greater chance to examine the structure of conversion. Perhaps the most familiar structure on the American scene is the twelve-step process first used in AA, but the language of change also has its difficult side, e.g., in cases of codependency. A strategy of conversion challenges the clergy’s role as motivators or educators and the way we look at Scripture, especially the psalms.

Saturday looks at “The Relationship of the Liturgical Artist to the Assembly.” The attention to ministry is reflected in workshops on the centrality of liturgy in parish life, the voluntary nature of most ministry, and the roles of individuals and groups of ministers. Special attention is paid to youth and ministry in and to the Hispanic community. The special Hispanic Day on Saturday offers further workshops on the special needs and concerns of this community.

Chicago: Over Seventy Offerings

Through the combined efforts of NPM and the Chicago Office of Divine Worship, the Regional Convention in Chicago (June 27-30) will offer almost as many workshops as one of our Na-
tional Conventions! The workshops are not as directly thematic as those in Arizona, but they echo the Convention theme, “Liturgy in Dialogue with the World.” That is especially true of those that focus on the links between the church and the world that are (or should be) found in worship, religious education, the way we build and rebuild our buildings—the most visible signs of the church’s presence, and the ways we attend to issues like peace and justice.

Workshops on music and musical liturgy are the mainstay of any NPM Convention, of course, so we offer a whole series of presentations called the Ritual Celebration Series, which offers a basic look at various rites: the Order of Christian Funerals, communal rites of healing (reconciliation and anointing), weddings, and the RCIA as well as infant baptism. There is a rich collection of workshops for musicians: cantors, keyboardists, organists, choirs and choir directors, handbell players, synthesizer users, repertoire … repertoire … and more repertoire. Directors of Music Ministry (DMMD), those who work with children and those who work in African American or Hispanic parishes.

Other workshops present opportunities to examine the various roles in worship: the assembly—in general and as mixed groups of adults and children or in multiethnic communities, presiders, preachers, lectors, planners, art and environmental specialists, dancers, acousticians, composers of texts spoken and sung, and those who lead prayer in the “domestic church.” For those just getting started, several workshops treat the basics of liturgy, symbol, proclamation, and sacrament. For those who are more advanced, there are presentations on special questions like our heritage from Jewish worship, especially in the eucharistic prayer, and continuing problems of antisemitism; what we’ve learned from the liturgical renewal; and sin and liturgical prayer.

Special workshops for religious educators explore children’s liturgical prayer and other aspects of teaching liturgy. And a final set of presentations explores the impact of contemporary culture on the church and vice versa. So we examine the basic relationship between the liturgical year and everyday life and between cultural forms and worship. We face the dysfunctional parish and ways to integrate “justice” music into worship. We look at the place of social justice in the liturgical movement and the problems of limited resources. And we think about being a culturally-formed church that uses an international liturgy.

Cantor Basics

Back in the fall of 1988, the Diocese of Austin joined with the Central Texas Pastoral Center and St. Edward’s University to sponsor a pilot program of basic cantor training. Similar to the NPM Cantor Schools in its approach, this program met once a month on Saturdays (though different schedules can be arranged) and offered sessions on voice class, sight singing, animation, liturgy, and Scripture. Participants had the opportunity between sessions to put what they had learned into practice in their home parishes, so they came to the next session with practical comments and questions.

This program was designed by Theresa Schlosser, and it offered a special blend of practical and theoretical training combined with reflective parish experience, all available close to home. Dioceses interested in sponsoring this program should contact the NPM National Office or talk to Theresa Schlosser directly at (607) 587-8732.

Hi, Roomie!

Never without new ideas, Theresa Schlosser (see previous story) has proposed a way to match roommates for NPM Conventions. Here is how it would work: People who want to share a room, but who do not know anyone coming to a particular event, would send a stamped postcard to a central location. They would not put anything on the “address” side of the card, but on the “message” side they would put their name, address, phone, and gender, along with the event they plan to attend, their arrival and departure dates, and their hotel choices. That card would be sent on to someone with (presumably) matching gender and hotel preferences, and their card would be sent to you. Then the two of you would be responsible for making contact and arrangements for sharing a room.

If enough people are interested in this proposal, we’ll try to set it up. Drop a line expressing your interest to: Roommate Service, NPM, 225 Sheridan Street, NW, Washington, DC 20011. (But don’t send a stamped postcard just yet … )
Elaine at the Keyboard

We’re pleased to announce that Elaine Rendler, whom many of our members know from Schools and Conventions past, has finally found the time to get some of her compositions into print. OCP Publications has released Keyboard Praise: Hymn Tune Medleys for Piano/Synthesizer. Further good news: This is Volume 1. The six medleys in this collection are wonderful combinations of new and old tunes, from “America Faith” (Foundation, Simple Gifts, and Holy Manna), to a “Deep River Medley” and a “Resurrection Fantasia” that combines Last Shall Erfreuen with Tom Conry’s I Will Not Die. There are also an arrangement of “Maran Modes,” “Consolation and Peace,” and a medley of How Can I Keep from Singing, Were You There, and The Water is Wide called “Songs of Hope for the Journey.”

Keyboard Praise, Vol. 1 (#9081) is available for $3.95 from OCP Publications, 5536 NE Hassalo, Portland, OR 97213. 1 (800) 422-3011. It is also distributed in Australia by Word of Life Distributors in Somerville, Victoria, and in the United Kingdom by the St. Thomas More Centre, London.

Meetings and Reports

News from the BCL

In his report to the National Meeting of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (October 11, 1989, Pittsburgh, PA), Bishop Joseph P. Delaney, chair of the Liturgy Committee of the NCCB, announced the status of several BCL and ICEL projects of interest to NPM members.

ICEL’s revision of the Sacramentary should be ready to go to the English-speaking member bishops’ conferences in 1992. In addition to revising the present translations, ICEL is also preparing new texts for a three-year cycle of opening prayers related to the readings, additional prefaces, alternative texts within the Order of Mass, and “pastoral notes” for each portion of the Sacramentary (similar to those now found in the RCIA and the Order of Christian Funerals). Present plans call for this new edition to be issued in two volumes after it receives final approval, because of the large numbers of new prayers and additional material. Volume one will contain the texts for Sundays, solemnities, and feasts, while volume two will be for weekdays and other occasions.

The BCL is preparing a second edition of the Lectionary for Mass based on the second Latin edition. It will contain additional readings, and all reading texts will be arranged in sense lines and drawn from the Revised New Testament of the New American Bible. Changes to that text will insure the use of inclusive language, following the principles set down by the Joint Committee (of the BCL and the Bishops’ Doctrine Committee) on Inclusive Language in Biblical Translations.

Work on the Lectionary for Masses with Children and Other Celebrations is nearing completion. The texts are from the American Bible Society’s Translation for Early Youth. That translation is geared for seven- to eight-year-old children and is a new translation from the original languages, faithful to the text, not a paraphrase. (An update

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Inclusive Language in Canada

Last August the six bishop members of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Team issued a statement on inclusive language titled "To Speak as a Christian Community." Their basic position is that Christians witness to the equality of all persons by word and deed, and that includes the use of inclusive language. Our language expresses our religious belief, and inclusive language expresses our belief in the equality of men and women, in the Gospel, and in the church as a communion.

While inclusive language may not reflect contemporary actuality (where people are still divided and treated unequally), the bishops believe such language "recalls the original harmony of creation" and expresses the new creation where "all are one in Christ." It will take time to implement a common use of inclusive language, and copyright laws forbid immediate changes in biblical and liturgical texts. We can use this time to find ways of inclusive speech that respect grammar and the language's beauty and clarity as well as for respectful discussion of various viewpoints on the topic "that should increase awareness and understanding." But we can begin to use more inclusive forms in the general intercessions (the "universal prayer" in Canada), in new hymns, and in preaching.

Friends in Print

Three people whose names are very familiar to NPM members and subscribers have recently published useful and challenging books. Dan Connors, former managing editor of Pastoral Music, has produced an inexpensive resource that ties in with the theme of this issue. Celebrating the Fifty Days of Easter is designed to help parishes and individuals enter the Easter season more fully. There are single-page meditations for each weekday based on the readings and prayers for the coming Sunday, and the Sunday reflections examine the major Easter symbols. Its inexpensive cover price ($0.95; bulk discounts available) makes it attractive as a parish gift to neophytes. Dan's booklet is available from Twenty-Third Publications, 185 Willow Street, PO Box 180, Mystic, CT 06355. (203) 536-2611. It is also available in Ireland from The Columba Press.

Another recent publication offers a different perspective on worship for most of our members. We usually look at worship from a "Catholic" perspective, beginning with the sacraments as the basic model. James F. White, professor of liturgy at the University of Notre Dame, has just published Protestant Worship: Traditions in Transition, which takes a new look at the development of the "nonsectarian alternative" to the worship experience. He examines seven characteristics of this form of worship, including social change, popular piety, the times and settings for worship, preaching and public prayers, and church music. Then he looks at the way those characteristics function in nine traditions, from Lutheran and Reformed to Frontier and Pentecostal. This is a scholarly work designed for serious reflection on the formation of liturgy in the Protestant church; it also throws a new light on the developing Catholic tradition as well. Published by Westminster/John Knox Press ($15.95, paper), White's book can be ordered from Presbyterian Publishing House, 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, KY 40202-1396. 1 (800) 227-2872.

And Brian Wren is still writing challenging and exciting hymn texts. His latest (thirty-five new texts, many with new tunes) are found in Bring Many Names ($3.95 from Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188). Wren draws images from the varieties of human endeavor (dancing, weaving, singing, weeping) and indeed from the various ways of being human to name God and our relation to God. There are even inclusive alternatives to traditional doxologies (including the Old Hundredth). One particularly striking text is "We Are Not Our Own." It is a wonderful hymn of community. The second stanza reads: "We are not alone. Earth names us: / past and present, peoples near and far / family and friends and strangers/show us who we are."

Two other recent publications may also prove to be "friends" to keep on hand. Christine Ammer has provided English translations for three thousand musical terms in other languages in The A to Z of Foreign Musical Terms ($6.95 from E. C. Schirmer/Boston, 138 Ipswich Street, Boston, MA 02215; [617] 236-1935). And Sr. Carol Frances Jegen has collaborated with Rabbi Byron L. Sherwin in collecting prayers and texts that can be used when Jews and Christians pray together. Such gatherings can be fairly sensitive occasions, tricky enough to get through without offense, let alone helping the assembly pray well together. The handsomely presented texts in Thank God are a welcome aid for such times ($6.95; bulk discounts available; from Liturgy Training Publications, 1800 North Hermitage Avenue, Chicago, IL 60622-1101. 1 (800) 933-1800).
Orlando Composers Project

The Diocese of Orlando has developed a program to encourage and support the creation of new ritual music in the diocese’s parish communities. The Composers Project has three purposes: to allow a wider distribution of those works deemed “well crafted” by a committee of competent pastoral musicians; to allow feedback on new works from pastoral musicians in the diocese; and to encourage the creation of new music for the texts of the revised RCIA, OCF, the liturgy of the hours, and for the eucharist in the various languages used for worship in the diocese.

This exciting program to recognize and develop local talent reflects a blend of self-directed learning, diocesan oversight, and industry sponsorship unfolded in five phases. The preliminary stages of the project have been sponsored by Sound Stage, a local sound system company. Michael Bogdan, the music specialist in the Diocesan Office of Liturgy, is overseeing the project, though the development of each stage is decided by the participants.

Phase One was a review of the various liturgical pieces composed by local musicians over the last several years. From all the compositions submitted, a panel of several judges chose a number of pieces that they felt showed outstanding talent. The composers of those pieces were then asked to develop new music for the RCIA and the Order of Christian Funerals. From these compositions, two were chosen by the same judges for publication.

The next phase of the project, held on November 4 of last year, was a Composition Seminar facilitated by Dr. Paul Langston, a composition theory specialist from Stetson University. The participants will decide, as a result of that seminar, what their next step should be.

For more information, write: Michael Bogdan, Office of Liturgy, Diocese of Orlando, PO Box 1800, Orlando, FL 32802. (407) 425-3556.

Briefly Noted

July in Biarritz. The Académie André-Marchal is organizing its ninth summer organ session for July 8–12 at Biarritz. This session will commemorate the tenth anniversary of Marchal’s death; it will be directed by Jean Wallet and André Pagenel. For a full brochure, write: Académie André-Marchal, 22 avenue Victor Hugo, 64200 Biarritz, FRANCE.

August in Helsinki. The 19th World Conference of the International Society for Music Education will be held at Finlandia Hall in Helsinki, Finland, August 7–12. Deadlines for proposed papers for presentation and the selection of performing groups have passed, but for further information on participating in the conference, write: Professor Paul R. Lehman, President, MENC, School of Music, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109.

Next Year in Europe. For information on various performance opportunities for bands, orchestras, and choral groups in 1991 and 1992 in Spain, West Germany, Austria, and the British Isles, write Musical Heritage International, 734 Central Avenue, Highland Park, IL 60035. 1 (800) 323-8158 or (312) 432-2400.
The Three Days
(Part 2)
Lent’s Multilayered Meanings

BY KENNETH F. JENKINS

O
f all the liturgical seasons perhaps the most devoutly observed yet least understood is Lent. While some Catholics might confess confusion about which days to fast on or on which to abstain from meat, most would say that Lent

Reverend Kenneth F. Jenkins, a priest of the Diocese of San Bernardino, CA, is presently serving as an associate director of the Secretariat of the Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy.

1. Lenten Season

6. "The annual Lenten season is the fitting time, to climb the holy mountain of Easter.

The Lenten season has a double character, namely to prepare both catechumens and faithful to celebrate the paschal mystery. The catechumens, both with the rite of election and scrutinies and by catechesis, are prepared for the celebration of the sacraments of Christian initiation; the faithful, ever more attentive to the word of God and prayer, prepare themselves by penance for the renewal of their baptismal promises."

7. Concerning the Rite of Christian Initiation

The whole rite of Christian initiation has a markedly paschal character, since it is therein that the sacramental participation in the death and resurrection of Christ takes place for the first time. Therefore Lent should have its full character as a time of purification and enlightenment, especially through the scrutinies and by the presentations, naturally the paschal vigil should be regarded as the proper time to celebrate the sacraments of initiation.

This trio of college educated, parochially involved, practicing Catholics saw little relationship between Lent and Easter.

though something of a surprise, support just what the circular letter on "Preparing and Celebrating the Paschal Feasts" calls the "inadequate formation given to the clergy and the faithful."

This lack of formation, the letter continues, has inhibited the full understanding and, therefore, the full celebration of the "paschal mystery as the center of the liturgical year and of Christian life" (#3).

Most of the people I asked agreed that Lent is an important season, but there was little agreement about its possible meaning. One person said that it's a time to enter into the passion and death of Christ, while another said that Lent is about penance in preparation for our sins. A third thought these "dreary weeks," as he called them, were set aside for spiritual reflection and personal improvement. When I asked if there was a relationship between Lent and Easter, I was astounded that this
8. Communities that do not have any catechumens should not however fail to pray for those who in the forthcoming Paschal Vigil will receive the sacraments of Christian Initiation. Pastors should draw the attention of the faithful to those moments of significant importance to their spiritual life nourished by their baptismal profession of faith, and which they will be invited to renew in the Easter Vigil, “the fullness of the Lenten observance.”

9. In Lent there should be catechesis for those adults who, although baptized when infants, were not brought up in the faith and consequently have not been confirmed nor have they received the Eucharist. During this period, penitential services should be arranged to help prepare them for the sacrament of reconciliation.

10. The Lenten season is also an appropriate time for the celebration of penitential rites on the model of the scrutinies for unbaptized children who are at an age to be catechized, and also for children already baptized, before being admitted to the sacrament of penance.

The bishop should have particular care to foster the catechumenate of both adults and children and, according to circumstances, to preside at the prescribed rites, with the devout participation of the local community.

b) Celebrations During the Lenten Season

11. The Sundays of Lent take precedence over all feasts and all solemnities. Solemnities occurring on these Sundays are observed on the preceding Saturday. The weekdays of Lent have precedence over obligatory memorials.

12. The catechisis on the paschal mystery and the sacraments should be given a special place in the Sunday homilies; the text of the Lectionary should be carefully explained, particularly the passages of the Gospel which illustrate the diverse aspects of baptism and of the other sacraments, and of the mercy of God.

13. Pastors should frequently and as fully as possible explain the word of God in homilies on weekdays, in celebrations of the word of God, in penitential celebrations, in various reunions, in visiting families or on the occasion of blessing families. The faithful should pray and attend weekday Mass, and where this is not possible, they should at least be encouraged to read the lessons, either with their family or in private.

14. “The Lenten season should retain something of its penitential character.” As regards catechisis, it is important to impress on the minds of the faithful not only the social consequences of sin, but also that aspect of the virtue of penance which involves the detestation of sin as an offense against God.

The virtue and practice of penance form a necessary part of the preparation for Easter: from that inner conversion of heart should spring the practice of penance, both for the individual Christian and of the whole community, which while being adapted to the conditions of the present time, should nevertheless witness to the evangelical spirit of penance and also be to the advantage of others.

The role of the church in penitential practices is not to be neglected and encouragement given to pray for sinners, and this intention should be included in the prayer of the faithful.

15. “The faithful are to be encouraged to participate in an ever more intense and fruitful way in the Lenten liturgy and in penitential celebrations. They are to be clearly reminded that both according to the law and tradition they should approach the sacrament of penance during this season so that with purified hearts they may participate in the paschal mysteries. It is important that during Lent the sacrament of penance be celebrated according to the rite for the reconciliation of several penitents with individual confession and absolution, as given in the Roman Ritual.”

Pastors should devote themselves to the ministry of reconciliation and provide sufficient time for the faithful to avail themselves of this sacrament.

16. “All Lenten observances should be of such a nature that they also witness to the life of the local church and foster it. The Roman tradition of the ‘stationary’ churches can be recommended as a model for gathering the faithful in one place. In the tri of college educated, parochially involved, practicing Catholics saw little relationship between the two seasons, other than the fact that one followed the other. It may be understandable that the full impact of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults has yet to reach them or even that they do not grasp how the Sunday readings lead to the celebration of the triduum. But not to grasp the basic connection between Lent and Easter suggests a significant lacuna in their knowledge of the basic Christian liturgical tradition.

It is rather difficult to celebrate the depth of the Lenten season, let alone the fullness of Easter joy, if parish churches are filled with faithful Catholics who have yet to move beyond their childhood understandings. This circular letter offers all of us in positions of liturgical leadership a challenge to take stock of how our Lenten celebrations reflect the rich personal and communal meaning of the season and whether these weeks really prepare a community for fifty days of unbounded joy.

It has been said that studying history liberates us from the misconceptions of the present. A brief outline of Lent’s historical development, then, may help to set aside misconceptions and make better sense of the multiple strata of meanings that have piled one atop another over the centuries.

Lent’s Layers of Meaning

Lent did not begin as a commemoration of Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem. In fact, the days we call “Lent” originally developed as a reflection of Jesus’ desert experience in preparation for his public ministry. By the late third or early fourth century C.E. an extended period of fasting was observed in northern Africa as a penitential practice. The length of the fast varied from place to place and year to year; only much later was a length of forty days commonly accepted. Those who took part in the fast were described as being nourished on small amounts of bread and water and on the Scriptures that were read at communal prayer services. Some local churches embraced the penitential nature of the fast more rigorously than others by providing an opportunity to begin, and ultimately conclude, a process of reconciliation for public sinners. As the catechumenate developed, these days of fasting provided an excellent opportunity to in-
corporate those making their final preparation for sacramental initiation.

The historical formation of Lent did not conclude here, at the end of the fourth century, however. As infant baptism took precedence over adult initiation and private confession replaced public "canonical" penance, the thrust of this time of fasting took on a new focus. By the eleventh and twelfth centuries the season came to be viewed principally as a time of personal penance, mortification, prayer, and almsgiving, even though the liturgical texts continued to reflect earlier meanings.

Not until the restoration of the Easter Vigil in the 1950s and the subsequent promulgation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (CSL, 1963) did the understanding of Lent as a period of final baptismal preparation and spiritual conversion come to fruition. Vatican II described Lent as having a twofold character, being both baptismal and penitential (CSL #109). Moving beyond an inward and personal attitude to penance, the Council emphasized the outward and social dimensions of sin, penance, and ultimately reconciliation. With the publication of the interim English translation of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (1974), the Lenten season came to be called "a time for spiritual recollection in preparation for the celebration of the paschal mystery" (RCIA, 1988 U.S. edition, #138). At the same time the RCIA described the period of purification and enlightenment for the elect as coinciding with Lent as a time of more intense spiritual preparation. In popular liturgical parlance, Lent has more recently been dubbed a "forty-day retreat" for the elect and the local community as they approach the waters of baptism and the celebration of Easter.

**Renewing the Promises**

As we try to cope with all these layers of meaning, what does the circular letter say that is new or that will help us better prepare for Easter? This letter is basically a compilation of norms found in other liturgical documents: it brings together directives found in the Sacramentary, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, the General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar, and the Ceremonial of Bishops, the most recently revised and translated component of the Roman Ritual. The letter...

this way the faithful can assemble in larger numbers, especially under the leadership of the bishop of the diocese, or at the tombs of the saints, or in the principal churches of the city or sanctuaries, or some place of pilgrimage which has a special significance for the diocese."

17. "In Lent the altar should not be decorated with flowers, and musical instruments may be played only to give necessary support to the singing;" This is in order that the penitential character of the season be preserved.

18. Likewise, from the beginning of Lent until the Paschal Vigil, Alleluia is to be omitted in all celebrations, even on solemnities and feasts.

19. The chants to be sung in celebrations especially of the eucharist and also at devotional exercises should be in harmony with the spirit of the season and the liturgical texts.

20. Devotional exercises which harmonize with the Lenten season are to be encouraged, for example, the Stations of the Cross; they should help foster the liturgical spirit with which the faithful can prepare themselves for the celebration of Christ's paschal mystery.

**c) Particular Details Concerning the Days of Lent**

21. "On the Wednesday before the first Sunday of Lent, the faithful receive ashes; thus entering into the time established for the purification of their souls. This sign of penance, a traditionally biblical one, has been preserved among the church's customs until the present day. It signifies the human condition of the sinner, who seeks to express his guilt before the Lord in an exterior manner and by so doing express his interior conversion, led on by the confident hope that the Lord will be merciful. This same sign marks the beginning of the way of conversion, which is developed through the celebration of the sacraments of penance during the days before Easter." 

The blessing and imposition of ashes should take place either in the Mass or outside of the Mass. In the latter case it is to be part of a Liturgy of the Word and conclude with the prayer of the faithful.

22. Ash Wednesday is to be observed as a day of penance in the whole church, one of both abstinence and fasting.

23. The first Sunday of Lent marks the beginning of the annual Lenten observance. In the Mass of this Sunday there should be some distinctive elements which underline this important moment; e.g., the entrance procession with litanies of the saints. During the Mass of the first Sunday in Lent, the bishop should celebrate the rite of election in the cathedral or in some other church as seems appropriate.

24. The Gospel pericopes of the Samaritan woman, of the man blind from birth and the resurrection of Lazarus are assigned to the third, fourth and fifth Sundays of Lent of Year A; of particular significance in relation to Christian initiation, they can also be read in Years B and C, especially in places where there are catechumens.

25. On the fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare) and on solemnities and feasts, musical instruments may be played and the altar decorated with flowers. Rose-colored vestments may be worn on this Sunday.

26. The practice of covering the crosses and images in the church may be observed if the episcopal conference should so decide. The crosses are to be covered until the end of the celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday. Images are to remain covered until the beginning of the Easter Vigil.


7. Cf. The Roman Ritual, Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, 8; Code of Canon Law, Canon 836.
8. Roman Missal, the Easter Vigil, 46.
13. Ibid., 16.5.
quotes from the Ceremonial to describe Lent as having “a double character, namely to prepare both catechumens and faithful to celebrate the paschal mystery” (#6; Ceremonial #249). Prayer, penance, and study for those who are already baptized, in other words, are to be directed toward a fuller renewal of baptismal promises as the process of conversion and spiritual development continues.

Our American individualism tends to provide a somewhat myopic view of penance and spiritual development. We are usually concerned simply with our own personal, individual development. But just as penance is outward and social, as Vatican II reminded us, so too is the Lenten journey of spiritual enrichment. The circular letter emphasizes communal gatherings as opportunities to embrace the Scripture and to expand our vision of conversion through penance services. Diocesan assemblies and processions are also encouraged, although most diocesan and parochial ministers would probably insist that a fine celebration of the Rite of Election is enough.

The document makes some interesting statements on the nature of the liturgical environment and music. It reminds us that “the altar should not be decorated with flowers, and musical instruments may be played only to give necessary support to the singing” (#17). The reason given for such restrictions is to maintain the penitential character of the season, but it is important to remember that on Sundays, even during Lent, the church celebrates the fullness of the paschal mystery—the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ. The victory over sin and death continues to be proclaimed, and the baptized continue to be renewed in the eucharist. Sunday is a day of feasting, not fasting, and even the Lenten season does not regulate the Sunday celebration to one of less joy or thanksgiving.

One can also make a case for the noble simplicity of Lenten liturgical environments and sensitively orchestrated seasonal music as hallmarks of American liturgical development. Certainly both should be appropriate reflections of Sunday and Lent, but ultimately the principal criterion must be whether they encourage the active, conscious participation of the assembly. It is that participation that leads to a recognition of and response to God’s call to conversion.

Of lesser significance to the document’s main points is the confusion that might result from the statement that “the first Sunday of Lent marks the beginning of the annual Lenten observance” (#23). The General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar place Lent’s beginning several days earlier, on Ash Wednesday. Both documents calculate the “forty days” of Lent, but each uses a different method. According to the circular letter Lent begins on the first Sunday, includes all the Sundays of Lent, and concludes as the triduum begins on Holy Thursday. In the General Norms, however, Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, excludes all the Sundays in the period, and runs “until the Mass of the Lord’s Supper exclusive” (General Norms #28). Both methods total about forty days. The question that arises is whether these forty days, which were originally days of fasting, should include Sundays and/or the paschal fast that takes place from Good Friday until the Easter Vigil. Such questions should not distract from a better understanding of how Lent can lead to a fuller celebration of Easter.

Final mention should be made of the Sunday readings, particularly the three gospel texts in cycle A in which Jesus gives living water to a Samaritan, restores sight to the blind, and resuscitates a friend to a new hope for life. In each of the Lenten gospel readings, not only in these three that correspond to the Sundays on which the scrutinies are celebrated, images are evoked that will come together at the Easter Vigil and then be developed on the Sundays of the Easter season. Like a kaleidoscope coming into a brilliant focus, each Lenten turn promises a new addition to a radiant collage as we finally reach the empty tomb.

The full celebration of the Easter feasts necessitates the full observance of Lent. That full observance requires adequate formation first of liturgical ministers and ultimately of all the baptized. Through careful planning of Lent and Easter as two interdependent seasons, quality formation will occur, and that will ultimately lead to the transformation of individuals and communities as together we “climb the holy mountain of Easter” (#6).
I spent several weeks in July, 1989, living in the village of Corofin in County Clare in the west of Ireland. Corofin’s population is five hundred, its main street is a quarter of a mile long, and the parish church, Saint Patrick’s, seats three hundred people. The circular letter on “Preparing and Celebrating the Paschal Feasts” was written for Corofin. Its provisions could be implemented there completely without changing a word.

Those of us clustered in our metropolitan areas across the North American continent, however, bring a different perspective to this document. Although the text does not name names, we live in one of those societies whose “certain attitudes . . . present difficulties for the faithful to participate in these celebrations” (#4). But it is not impossible to celebrate and live the paschal mystery in our American context. American liturgists and pastoral musicians can be thankful for this timely reminder of the mystery’s centrality.

Section II of the letter—“Holy Week”—consists of three parts: Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday), the chrism Mass, and penitential celebrations in “Lent” (the head says that, but the text is only concerned with such celebrations during Holy Week).

II. Holy Week

27. During Holy Week the church celebrates the mysteries of salvation accomplished by Christ in the last days of his life on earth, beginning with his messianic entrance into Jerusalem.

The Lenten season lasts until the Thursday of this week. The Easter triduum begins with the evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper, is continued through Good Friday with the celebration of the Passion of the Lord and Holy Saturday, to reach its summit in the Easter Vigil and concludes with Vespers of Easter Sunday.

“The days of Holy Week, from Monday to Thursday inclusive, have precedence over all other celebrations.” It is not fitting that baptisms and confirmations be celebrated on these days.

a) Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday)

28. Holy Week begins on Passion (or Palm) Sunday, which joins the foretelling of Christ’s regal triumph and the proclamation of the Passion. The connection between both aspects of the paschal mystery should be shown and explained in the celebration and catechesis of this day.

Passion Sunday is the beginning of Holy Week. The text’s description of this Sunday points to the first liturgical-catechetical-pastoral problem of the day’s liturgy: It “joins the foretelling of Christ’s regal triumph and the proclamation of the Passion” (#28). However, some of the tension inherent in this conjunction of the passion narrative with an anticipation of Easter triumph is diluted by the directive that the full-scale procession (“in honor of Christ the king,” #29) with palms (“a reminder of the victory of Christ”) may take place only once in each parish—at the Mass with the largest attendance. Of the other two choices for the entrance rite at Masses this weekend, one is so ritualistic thin (including neither palms nor people) as to be laughable as a “commemoration of the Lord’s entrance into Jerusalem.”

The solemn procession begins in a place “distinct from the church to which the procession will move” (#29), suggesting a procession out of doors. In some years the weather will influence this outdoor procession; in all years, the lack of processional experience will dampen the triumphant experience the letter desires for this opening rite. For the most part, liturgical processions are movements that we watch, not ones in which we participate.

Already in the course of Lent, on the Second Sunday, the liturgy assured us that Easter will come. The joyful anticipation of Easter on Passion Sunday is a problem only if it supplies people with a motive for a “cheap Easter,” i.e., nonattendance at the triduum celebrations.

The letter mentions music only twice in connection with Passion Sunday: songs to accompany the solemn procession (#29, 32) and the singing of the passion narrative (#33). The passion should be proclaimed in its entirety (even though the lectionary offers an abbreviated version). To alleviate the tedium of length, the letter recommends that the text be sung or read by three persons in the roles of Christ, narrator, and people. Liturgists have objected to such role-playing,” however, because it destroys the sense of one book for proclamation and obscures the gospel’s original literary form.

Hijacked Oil

The second part of the letter’s section on Holy Week (IIb, 35-36) gathers directives and suggestions for the chrism Mass, traditionally associated with Holy Thursday. Continuing the emphasis on unitary celebration, the text directs that there be only one chrism Mass in each diocese, celebrated on Holy Thursday, if possible. In a bow to the tight schedules of Holy Week (and the holiday period mentioned in #4), however, the document allows the transference of the chrism Mass to another...
29. The commemoration of the entrance of the Lord into Jerusalem has according to ancient custom been celebrated with a solemn procession in which the faithful in song and gesture imitate the Hebrew children who went to meet the Lord singing Hosanna.30

The procession may take place only once, before the Mass which has the largest attendance, even if this should be in the evening either of Saturday or Sunday. The congregation should assemble in a secondary church or chapel or in some other suitable place distinct from the church to which the procession will move.

In this procession the faithful carry palm or other branches. The priest and the ministers, also carrying branches, precede the people.31

The palms or branches are blessed so that they can be carried in the procession. The palms should be taken home, where they will serve as a reminder of the victory of Christ which they celebrated in the procession.

Pastors should make every effort to ensure that this procession in honor of Christ, the king, be so prepared and celebrated that it is of great spiritual significance in the life of the faithful.

30. The missal, in order to commemorate the entrance of the Lord into Jerusalem, in addition to the solemn procession described above, gives two other forms, not simply for convenience, but to provide for those situations when it will not be possible to have the procession.

The second form is that of a solemn entrance, when the procession cannot take place outside the church. The third form is a simple entrance such as is used at all Masses on this Sunday which do not have the solemn entrance.32

31. Where the Mass cannot be celebrated, there should be a celebration of the word of God on the theme of the Lord’s messianic entrance and passion, either on Saturday evening or on Sunday at a convenient time.33

32. During the procession, the choir and people should sing the chants proposed in the Roman Missal, especially Psalms 23 and 46, as well as other appropriate songs in honor of Christ, the king.

day, "but one always close to Easter" (#35). Most dioceses in the United States choose to transfer the Mass to the Monday or Tuesday of Holy Week.

The chrism Mass has two purposes: to consecrate the chrism and bless the oils to be used in the initiation rites at the Easter Vigil and in other sacramental celebrations through the year and to manifest the priesthood shared by bishop, priests, and deacons.

Almost as an aside the text desires that “the faithful . . . be encouraged to participate” (#35). They might find such participation discouraging, since the Mass texts are, as British liturgist Christopher Walsh puts it, “unfortunately clericalist, or more specifically sacerdotalist, in tendency.” He laments the fact that “this age-old liturgy of oil was more or less hijacked in 1970 by the superimposition of the related but extraneous theme of priesthood for disciplinary and ideological ends particular to the late sixties.” The current structure of the chrism Mass certainly seems out of step with the shared pastoral ministry developing in the United States.

The circular letter recommends that the delivery of oils to individual parishes on Holy Thursday be made a teachable moment about their use and effects. But to introduce the oils into the evening Mass is to make them a focus in a celebration in which they play no part. It would make more sense to present them solemnly during the Easter Vigil, at the initiation rites.

Firing Penitential Blanks

The final section of the letter’s treatment of Holy Week (II,c,37) urges that the Lenten season be closed “with a penitential celebration” held before the triduum begins, but not immediately before the evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday. A footnote reveals that the text’s author(s) had in mind what we would call a “Bible service,” a liturgy of the word with a penitential theme, but with no provision for the sacrament of penance. Indeed the Rite of Penance warns that “care must be taken to ensure that the faithful do not confuse these celebrations with the celebration of the sacrament of penance.”

The purpose is to provide some sort of public closure to the season of Lent, but several circumstances militate against this way of doing it. First, aside from

The lack of processional experience will dampen the triumphant experience of this opening rite.
The joyful anticipation of Easter on Passion Sunday is a problem only if it supplies people with a motive for a "cheap Easter."

from the fact that Bible services are a dead letter on the American pastoral scene, a nonsacramental penitential celebration will strike most people as "firing with blanks," especially since communal penance services that include the sacrament have proven so popular over the last twenty years. Second, many parishes schedule communal penance services early in Holy Week, by now a traditional practice that the anemic alternative proposed here would find it hard to preempt. Third, although it would be helpful to signal the end of Lent more strongly than we do, parishes may be reluctant to dilute their Holy Week schedules with yet another celebration to plan, promote, and execute.

Although it is helpful to have gathered in one place, as this letter does, the various liturgical norms regarding Holy Week and the Easter triduum, this text breaks no new ground. Indeed, it does not even offer resolutions of the four "abuses" it cites as the motives for its genesis: the waning of the concept of vigil, the popularity of devotions other than the official celebrations, the inade-

33. The Passion narrative occupies a special place. It should be sung or read in the traditional way, that is, by three persons who take the part of Christ, the narrator and the people. The Passion is proclaimed by deacons or priests, or by lay readers; in the latter case, the part of Christ should be reserved to the priest.

The proclamation of the Passion should be without candles and incense; the greeting and the signs of the cross are omitted; only a deacon reads for the blessing, as he does before the Gospel.

For the spiritual good of the faithful the Passion should be proclaimed in its entirety, and the readings which proceed it should not be omitted.

34. After the Passion has been proclaimed, a homily is to be given.


35. The Chrism Mass, which the bishop concelebrates with his presbyterium and at which the holy chrism is consecrated and the oils blessed, manifests the communion of the priests with their bishop in the same priesthood and ministry of Christ. At this Mass the priests who concelebrate with the bishop should come from different parts of the diocese, thus showing in the consecration of the chrism to be his witnesses and cooperators just as in their daily ministry they are his helpers and counselors.

The faithful are also to be encouraged to participate in this Mass and to receive the sacrament of the eucharist.

Traditionally the Chrism Mass is celebrated on the Thursday of Holy Week. If, however, it should prove to be difficult for the clergy and people to gather with the bishop, this rite can be transferred to another day, but one always close to Easter.

The chrism and the oil of catechumens is to be used in the celebration of the sacraments of initiation on Easter night.

36. There should be only one celebration of the Chrism Mass, given its significance in the life of the diocese, and it should take place in the cathedral or, for pastoral reasons, in another church, which has a special significance.

The holy oils can be brought to the individual parishes before the celebration of the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper or at some other suitable time. This can be a means of catechizing the faithful about the use and effects of the holy oils and chrism in Christian life.

c) The Penitential Celebrations in Lent

37. It is fitting that the Lenten season should be concluded, both for the individual Christian as well as for the whole Christian community, with a penitential celebration, so that they may be helped to prepare to celebrate more fully the paschal mystery.
The oils and the chrism perfume await presentation at the Chrism Mass. Photo courtesy of The Catholic Review.

quate formation of priests and people, and the attitudes of modern society (#3-4). It merely repeats material already on the books.

And it does this in language that is less than inspirational. The translation of the circular letter that accompanies the essays in this issue of Pastoral Music is the official English translation prepared and distributed by the Vatican. I have decried elsewhere the poor quality of these official English texts, but I will make the point again.

Internal evidence indicates that an American prepared the translation from an Italian and/or Latin original, for the English contains grammatical errors that only an American would make, e.g., “should try and attend” (#13), “the chrism and the oil... is to be used” (#35), and so on. The translator may have a working knowledge of the languages involved, but the finished product lacks felicity. The passive voice used throughout gives a plodding quality to the text. And at times the English is turgid to the point of meaninglessness: Read the three paragraphs of #14 from the section on Lent, then try to parse them coherently. It is time that we demand official translations of liturgical documents that exhibit the same quality and beauty that we desire for our liturgy.

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Almost as an aside the text desires that “the faithful... be encouraged to participate.”

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4. For a commentary on the chrism Mass, see Adolf Adam, The Liturgical Year, 112-13.


The Easter Triduum

Crucified, Buried, and Risen

BY DAVID N. POWER, O.M.I.

The purpose of these numbers in the document is to stress the unity of the triduum and to make some general suggestions as to its celebration. The document follows the principles adopted in the reforms of Pius XII in 1955 with regard to the triduum’s composition: it begins with the commemoration of the Last Supper on Thursday evening and ends with vespers of Easter Sunday.

III. The Easter Triduum in General

38. The greatest mysteries of the redemption are celebrated yearly by the church, beginning with the evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday until Vespers of Easter Sunday. This time is called “the triduum of the crucified, buried and risen.” It is also called the “Easter triduum” because during it is celebrated the paschal mystery, that is, the passing of the Lord from this world to his Father. The church, by the celebration of this mystery, through liturgical signs and sacraments, is united to Christ, her spouse, in intimate communion.

39. The Easter fast is sacred on the first two days of the triduum, in which according to ancient tradition the church fasts “because the Spouse has been taken away.” Good Friday is a day of fasting and abstinence; it is also recommended that Holy Saturday be so observed so that the church, with uplifted and welcoming heart, be ready to celebrate the joys of the Sunday of the resurrection.

40. It is recommended that there be a communal celebration of the office of readings and morning prayer on Good Friday and Holy Saturday. The events being commemorated: the supper with its washing of the feet and the eucharistic command; the betrayal, passion, and death of Friday; the lying in the tomb; the rising from the dead and the Easter appearances. The congregation is keyed into this sequence through the triduum’s liturgies and observances. This arrangement is not so much a historicization as it is a necessary memorial of those events in which God’s saving action enters human history. By focusing on the particular moments of the passion, people are helped in their devotion to the living Christ as well as in their remembrance of his great love and compassion.

On the other hand, the document observes that it is the mystery and not simply the historical moments being celebrated and that this celebration is done in liturgical signs and sacraments (#38). This statement underscores the symbolic rather than the purely historical nature of all the services, such as the veneration of the cross and the praise of the Easter candle. It is in the nature of a sacramental or symbolic celebration to draw many things into a unity of meaning or to bring the meaning of a sequence of events into particular focus in a single ritual.

Living symbols both gather and scatter meanings. In that sense, the three days offer a congregation a sequence of rites, each of which in its own way draws the congregation to the heart of the redemptive mystery. Thus the washing of the feet as an act of loving service, the veneration of the cross on which Christ triumphed, the watching at the tomb through Saturday’s fast, the gathering in the night made bright as day, and the proclamation of the Gospel of the resurrection are each in their own way expressive of the total mystery of the three days. At the moment that each celebration focuses on its key symbolic action, attention is no longer drawn to a sequence of events but to the totality of the mystery as it is celebrated within that symbol.

While the document rightly calls for some suitable catechesis as a means to greater participation (#41), it is well to recall that the best catechesis is sensate celebration. The symbolic actions themselves have the power to enlighten and inspire when they succeed in actually drawing people into their celebration by sight, sound, touch, and voice. There...
is no part of the triduum celebration at which the congregation can be left as spectator or audience. The washing of the feet; the singing of the passion narrative; the veneration of the cross; the praise and procession of the paschal candle; the blessing of the water; the baptismal profession, immersion, and anointing; the welcome of neophytes into the congregation; and the communion at the eucharistic table—all have the potential to draw the entire congregation into the mystery. Twenty years after Vatican II, it is surely axiomatic to say that the most elaborate explanation draws no participation in faith or hope if it is attached to mean symbols, as it is also true that windy explanations can kill good liturgy on the spot.

A Space of Three Days

It is clear that the Congregation for Divine Worship would like the three days to be a time of Christian reflection and prayer, even of retreat, rather than simply a sequence of harried preparation and breathless rites. It is difficult to realize that goal in today’s social circumstances, but the suggestions made in the document may offer at least some possibilities.

The two-day fast is given importance, embracing not only Friday but also Saturday. Psychologically there is nothing like a fast for enforcing the senses and the mind. Instead of linking this fast with the goal of improved health, as so many do in a society concentrated on self, the triduum links fasting with meditation on the taking away of the Spouse and the expectation of the resurrection (#39). This is a case of retrieving the genuine meaning of

The three days should be a time of Christian reflection and prayer rather than a sequence of harried preparation and breathless rites.

the Christian fast as a communion with Christ in his sufferings and thus also as an act of compassion for the world and an expression of eschatological hope. From ancient Christian times, fasting was seen as a preparation for the eucharistic table, as a hunger for the Lord. It was to be broken only in communion, when through the blessed food and drink of Christ’s body and blood, one joined fully in the joy and hope of Christ’s Pasch. The fast is a primary means to make the entire time of the triduum a participation in the paschal mystery of Christ.

Some other suggestions in the document have to do with times of prayer distinct from the central liturgical actions, by which the three days as a unit of time can become a sacrament of the mystery. The Congregation mentions morning prayer on Good Friday and

It is fitting that the bishop should celebrate the office in the cathedral, with as far as possible the participation of the clergy and the people (#41). This office, formerly called “Tenebrae,” held a special place in the devotion of the faithful as they meditated upon the passion, death and burial of the Lord while awaiting the announcement of the resurrection.

For the celebration of the Easter triduum it is necessary that there should be a sufficient number of ministers and assistants who should be prepared so that they know what their role is in the celebration. Pastors must ensure that the meaning of each part of the celebration be explained to the faithful so that they may participate more fully and fruitfully.

The chants of the people and also of the ministers and the celebrating priest are of special importance in the celebration of Holy Week and particularly of the Easter triduum because they add to the solemnity of these days and also because the texts are more effective when sung.

The episcopal conferences are asked, unless provision has already been made, to provide music for those parts which it can be said should always be sung, namely:

a) The general intercessions of Good Friday, the deacon’s invitation and the acclamation of the people.

b) Chants for the showing and veneration of the cross.

c) The acclamations during the procession with the paschal candle and the Easter proclamation, the responsive Alleluia, the litany of the saints and the acclamation after the blessing of water.

Since the purpose of sung texts is also to facilitate the participation of the faithful, they should not be lightly omitted; such texts should be set to music. If the text for use in the liturgy has not yet been set to music, it is possible as a temporary measure to select other similar texts which are set to music. It is, however, fitting that there should be a collection of texts set to music for these celebrations, paying special attention to:

a) Chants for the procession and blessing of palms, and for the entrance into church.

b) Chants to accompany the procession with the holy oils.
The best catechesis is sensate celebration.

The Quality of Celebration

Other recommendations in this section of the document have to do with the quality of celebration. Some concern the preparation of the ministers, while others suggest linking smaller congregations in order to provide a more fitting celebration of the services. The proposals that religious communities participate in these services in parish churches and that seminarians (treated here as a breed apart) gather where the bishop is to be found (#43) show that we still have to develop approaches to corporate worship that can help undo the division among the baptized, clergy, and religious.

Most of the recommendations about the quality of worship have to do with music and chant (#42). Some of the music proposed as desirable belongs to the roles of specific ministers. This is the

Saturday, as well as the office of readings, and in so doing it evokes memories (not nostalgic, one hopes) of the office of Tenebrae, with its striking chant and awesome candle ritual. The intention is to offer ways that lead the faithful to meditate on “the passion, death and burial of the Lord while awaiting the announcement of the resurrection” (#40).

Obviously these specific suggestions are much more suitable for religious communities and seminaries than they are for the general members of the congregation or for the parish. The desire to provide people with an instrument of meditation, however, should challenge parishes and their pastoral teams. Families might be helped to find ways to spend a few moments together in reading the passion or otherwise meditating on Christ’s suffering and compassion. With some volunteer help, other than that of the ministers engaged in the liturgical action, it might be possible to provide a time of collective meditation in the church before the reserved sacrament on Thursday night, a biblical way of the cross on Friday, and short periods of reflection in the parish church in the course of Saturday.

c) Chants to accompany the procession with the gifts on Holy Thursday in the evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper, and hymns to accompany the procession of the blessed sacrament to the place of repose.

d) The responsorial psalms at the Easter Vigil, and chants to accompany the sprinkling with blessed water.

Music should be provided for the Passion narrative, the Easter proclamation and the blessing of baptismal water; obviously the melodies should be of a simple nature in order to facilitate their use.

In larger churches where the resources permit, a more ample use should be made of the church’s musical heritage, both ancient and modern, always ensuring that this does not impede the active participation of the faithful.

43. It is fitting that small religious communities, both clerical and lay, and other lay groups should participate in the celebration of the Easter triduum in neighboring principal churches.

Similarly, where the number of participants and ministers is so small that the celebrations of the Easter triduum cannot be carried out with the requisite solemnity, such groups of the faithful should assemble in a larger church.

Also, where there are small parishes with only one priest it is recommended that such parishes should assemble, as far as possible, in a principal church and there participate in the celebrations.

On account of the needs of the faithful, where a pastor has the responsibility for two or more parishes in which the faithful assemble in large numbers and where the celebrations can be carried out with the requisite care and solemnity, the celebrations of the Easter triduum may be repeated in accord with the given norms.

So that seminary students might live fully Christ’s paschal mystery and thus be able to teach those who will be committed to their care, they should be given a thorough and comprehensive liturgical formation. It is important that during their formative years in the seminary they should experience fruit-
fully the solemn Easter celebrations, especially those over which the bishop presides.\(^{49}\)


43. Cf. 2 Tim. 2:19-20; Tertullian, De ieudia, 2 and 13, Collected Works of Christian Writers, Latin series, II, p. 1271.
44. Cf. Ceremonial of Bishops, 295; Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 110.
45. Cf. ibid., 296; General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours, 210.
46. Cf. Congregation for Rites, Instruction on Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery (May 25, 1967), 26: AAS 59 (1967) 558. N.B. In monasteries of nuns, every effort should be made to celebrate the Easter triduum with the greatest possible ceremony but within the monastery church.

Music for the passion narrative, the Easter proclamation, and the blessing of the water. The congregation’s parts that should always be sung are the intercessions and the veneration of the cross on Good Friday. For the congregation at the Vigil, the document mentions the response to the Easter proclamation, the alleluia, the litany of the saints, and the acclamation after the blessing of the water.

The pattern here is one of sung dialogue between minister and people. The sense of chant as a key mode of participation in central liturgical actions is on target, as is the appreciation of the responsorial form. It need only be remarked that we await a development of the sense of other liturgical rites that would see the principle applied more broadly. Thus responsory or acclamation could be built into the blessings of the paschal candle and the baptismal water and even into the chanting of the passion narrative. A model for such dialogue has been supplied in the texts for eucharistic prayers for celebrations with children, but it has still to be followed through in developing all sorts of texts for use with complete congregations. The triduum would be a great place to begin.

Among other chants that deserve attention, processions are given pride of place. Movement and voice go well together in drawing congregations into an action and a mystery. Sometimes a procession originates simply in the need to bring a congregation from one place to another, as after the blessing of the fire and the lighting of the candle at the church entrance during the Vigil or in the brief but significant entrance of the neophytes into the congregation. Sometimes it is set up for its own intrinsic memory or its pilgrimage significance, as with the procession of the palms on Passion Sunday or the procession for venerating the cross on Good Friday. In either case, the accompaniment of movement by participated chant is largely what gives the procession its symbolic power. This fact is better appreciated by people in the traditions of gospel music than by others.

The attention given to two processions on Holy Thursday is curious. The first is the procession with gifts, highlighted in preference to the washing of feet. The significance attached to this procession has to do with service of the poor (\#52). If there is one liturgical action that traditionally expresses an attitude of service, and especially service to the poor, it is the Holy Thursday foot washing. In the current ritual, of course, this ceremonial has been turned into a historical reenactment of the washing at the Last Supper, whereas in fact it originated in the monastic and cathedral practice of serving and caring for the poor, especially on this day, in response to the command to do to one another as Christ has done to us.

One of the hardest processions to provide for musically is the one to the place of repose. It is hard to sense the purpose of this reservation and thus of the procession leading to it. If our western heritage were unaccustomed to public sacramental reservation and experienced it only in connection with a eucharist of the presanctified, or if communion from consecrated bread were a truly extraordinary experience, the situation would be different, and the procession could be compelling. But as it is, the solemnity attached to this act appears to be so much fuss over something not at all unusual; the procession seems to be without a purpose or any intrinsic significance in the sequence of celebrations, and it is hard to make it engaging.

In general, this section of the document draws attention to the organic unity of all the services and to the sacramentality of time itself. Though it appears somewhat narrow in the meaning it attaches to this liturgical sequence, it invites us to reflect on the meaning, taking as our starting point the actual services. It encourages good and careful celebration and an appreciation of the sacramentality of time in asking that the entire space of days be afforded its meaning and be devoted to the memory of the passion and the expectation of the resurrection. It underlines the quality of celebrations in different ways, especially as promoted through careful preparation of the ministers and the use of music. All of this is sage advice that can help congregations focus their efforts at improved celebrations that will be not only performed well, but will be qualitative and spirit-filled.
Holy Thursday

Naming the Abuse

BY EILEEN BURKE-SULLIVAN

E vening ... bells ... bread ... bare feet ... wine ... processions ... glory ... sorrow ...

Pange lingua gloriosi ... the poor ... stillness ... deepening darkness ... midnight ... Holy Thursday begins the sacred triduum with a swirl of images, sounds, and moods that form a paradoxical entry into the mystery of our

Christian faith. In its “Circular Letter on Preparing and Celebrating the Paschal Feasts” the Congregation for Divine Worship reiterates some important ritual considerations that shape the Holy Thursday liturgy. Since the letter is addressed specifically to the problem of “correcting abuses” in current practice, all of the important ritual considerations are not covered—some are not even mentioned—so someone planning the triduum would find the document helpful only in a context where the fuller treatment of other texts is available.

Some issues of worship continue to trouble parishes, dioceses, or national conferences enough, however, that it is worth considering what the letter addresses as well as what it does not. It is a truism that liturgy shapes, expresses, and catechizes our theology; it is further widely accepted that symbolic language is often more powerful (if somewhat more ambiguous) than verbal language in communicating mystery and faith. It is important, then, that our liturgy, filled as it is with symbolic and verbal language, be done with care, consideration, and ongoing reflection.

On the less positive side, unfortunately, this letter conveys a cheerless, hand-slapping tone. The Congregation will receive more cooperation from educated laity and clergy alike when documents are addressed to intelligent adults rather than in a tone of a petulant chiding aimed as if to reacquaint six-year-olds. The tone is unfortunate because it suggests that Roman authority fails to revere and respect its worldwide community and because many who might profit by the reminders will most likely ignore the letter as one more impractical and uncaring complaint from people who do nothing real about pastoring in living parishes.

Despite its tone the document does offer some valuable reminders, particularly five important issues of concern for preparing and celebrating Holy Thursday. Generally these issues apply to the eucharist in varying degrees of emphasis every time it is celebrated. That makes sense, since celebrating Holy Thursday is about celebrating the eucharistic dimension of the paschal mystery. The five issues are: the pre-eminent role of the community in the celebration; the struggle for the integrity of liturgical signs; the celebration of Christlike service; the relationship of Holy Thursday to the rest of the triduum; and the juxtaposition of solemnity with simplicity and joy with sorrow as they have an impact on worship.

And I have to raise one further issue that the document does not address: the size of the worshipping assembly.

Community Pre-eminence

The letter recognizes the importance of the community to the Holy Thursday mystery by reaffirming that the liturgy is to be held at a time in the evening that makes it available to the greatest number of parishioners. Furthermore, an additional celebration is permitted if a sufficiently large number of people want to participate (#46-47). But note that "convenience Masses" for small private groups are not permitted. The document is also clear that priests are not to celebrate the eucharist without a congregation, witnessing to the fact that the eucharist demands the presence of the whole church, not just the clergy (#47). The clear message here seems to be that Christ instituted the eucharist for the whole church, and all the baptized believers are commanded to “do this in memory of me.”

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IV. Holy Thursday

Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper

44. With the celebration of Mass on the evening of Holy Thursday, “the church begins the Easter triduum and recalls the Last Supper, in which the Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, showing his love for those who were his own in the world, gave his body and blood under the species of bread and wine, offering to his Father and giving them to the apostles so that they might partake of them, and he commanded them and their successors in the priesthood to perpetuate this offering.”

45. Careful attention should be given to the mysteries which are commemorated in this Mass: the institution of the eucharist, the institution of the priesthood and Christ’s command of brotherly love. The homily should explain these points.

46. The Mass of the Lord’s Supper is celebrated in the evening, at a time that is more convenient for the full participation of the whole local community.
community. All priests may concelebrate even if on this day they have already
concelebrated the Chrism Mass or if,
for the good of the faithful, they
must celebrate another Mass.31

47. Where pastoral considerations
require it, the local ordinary may
permit another Mass to be cele-
brated in churches and oratories in
the evening, and in the case of true
necessity, even in the morning; but
only for those faithful who cannot
otherwise participate in the evening
Mass. Care should nevertheless be
taken to ensure that celebrations of
this kind do not take place for the
benefit of private persons or of small
groups and that they are not to the
detriment of the main Mass.

According to the ancient tradition
of the church, all Masses without the
participation of the people are on
this day forbidden.32

48. The tabernacle should be com-
pletely empty before the celebra-
tion.33 Hosts for the communion
of the faithful should be consecrated
during that celebration.34 A suf-
cient amount of bread should be
consecrated to provide also for com-
munion on the following day.

49. For the reservation of the
blessed sacrament, a place should be
prepared and adorned in such a way
as to be conducive to prayer and
meditation; that sobriety appropri-
ate to the liturgy of these days is en-
joined, to the avoidance or suppress-
on of all abuses.35

When the tabernacle is located in a
chapel separated from the central
part of the church, it is appropriate
to prepare there the place of repose
and adoration.

50. During the singing of the
hymn “Gloria in Excelsis,” in accord-
dance with local custom the bells
may be rung and should thereafter
remain silent until the “Gloria in
Excelsis” of the Easter Vigil, unless the
conference of bishops or the local
ordinary for a suitable reason has
decided otherwise.36 During this
same period the organ and other
musical instruments may be used
only for the purpose of supporting
the singing.37

51. The washing of the feet of
chosen men which, according to tradi-
tion, is performed on this day, re-
resents the service and charity of
Christ, who came “not to be served,
but to serve.”38 This tradition should

This ecclesiology is not uniformly
upheld in the letter, however, and there
is a strong tension with the tradition of
celebrating the institution of orders at
this Mass as well (#44, 45, 47). For too
many centuries the attitude that the eu-
charist belonged only to the clergy has
prevailed, to the terrible detriment of
the church, yet the Congregation im-
plies (#44) that Christ’s “own in the
world” are the apostles and their suc-
cessors in the (ordained) priesthood.

The message that the eucharist is
truly given to the whole church could be
made clear and uncompromising in
the eucharistic celebration by such im-
portant symbols as offering commu-
nion under the form of wine as well as
bread to all communicants and having
the foot washing done by the priest and
other members of the community for
all, or at least for representatives of all,
in the community. Then the homily
might well be given to exploring the
mystery of how the baptized must cel-
brate the eucharist if we are to be true
to our vocation as Christians (instead of
using this time for explanations, as sug-
gested in #45, since that is catechesis,
not homiletics).

The Struggle for
Authentic Signs

The struggle for authentic liturgical
signs is not unique to the triduum; it
should be part of all our work of praising
God. But Holy Week deserves special
attention because we celebrate so fully that the signs that are most impor-
tant can be lost because they are most
familiar, while our attention is on the
galaxy of other, less familiar, symbolic
words, gestures, and things.

The Congregation’s letter falls into
this trap when it is most silent regard-
ing the importance of the eucharistic
signs. It could have reiterated (but did
not) the statement in the General
Instruction of the Roman Missal (#283)
that the “nature of the sign demands
that the material for the eucharistic cel-
bration truly have the appearance of
food.” The bread should look like bread,
even though unleavened, in
other words. In addition (#240 of
the General Instruction), “Holy commu-
nion has a more complete form when it is
received under both kinds ... Moreover
there is a clearer expression of that will
by which the new and everlasting cov-
enant is ratified in the blood of the
Lord ...” It would seem to be one of the
greatest abuses that even on Holy
Thursday some communities might not
have the opportunity of entering fully
into the mystery being celebrated be-
cause the signs are so weak and ine-
expressive that the message is lost.

The document does take pains to call
for clear and adequate signs surround-
ning the reservation of the blessed sacra-
ment. The place of reservation is to be
simple and dignified, but it should in
no way represent a “tomb.” The kind of
historicity implied in such decorations
undermines the whole concept of
memorial.

The abuses cited in #49 and 55 in-

The signs that are most
important can be lost because
they are most familiar.
Catholic Bishops, who have requested that the loving service of women be recognized as reflecting the example of Christ. There are two problems with this statement, and the least of them is that the intent seems to be that twelve men recall the historical moment of the foot washing. The problem is that such historicized memorializing is exactly what is forbidden in the strictures against having the place of reservation on this same night resemble a tomb.

The second problem with the limitation of the gesture to “chosen men” is the presumption that this stance, appearing here and in the new Ceremonial of Bishops, reflects a belief that those whose feet are washed can more closely stand in for Jesus and/or the apostles because of their maleness than because of their authentic service. This same line of argument was used in the document on the ordination of women issued some years ago; it is a dangerous argument because it undermines the whole theology of baptism. The command to “do this in memory of me,” as I mentioned above, was given to the whole church, not only to the ordained successors of the apostles. Church leaders themselves have insisted that all baptized Christians are to “do this”—follow the example of the servant Christ—by serving one another lovingly, caring for each other’s needs and concerns, laying down their own lives for a friend, and taking, eating, and drinking in remembrance. Such commands have not traditionally been applied only to the ordained, but they are constantly taught as the call to holiness for every member of the community of faith (cf. the papal letter Christifideles Laici, #14ff).

be maintained, and its proper significance explained.

52. Gifts for the poor, especially those collected during Lent as the fruit of penance, may be presented in the offertory procession while the people sing “Ubi Caritas Est Vera.”

53. It is more appropriate that the eucharist be borne directly from the altar by the deacons or acolytes or extraordinary ministers at the moment of communion for the sick and infirm who must communicate at home, so that in this way they may be more closely united to the celebrating church.

54. After the postcommunion prayer, the procession forms, with the cross bearer at its head. The blessed sacrament, accompanied by lighted candles and incense, is carried through the church to the place of reservation; to the singing of the hymn “Pange Lingua” or some other eucharistic song. This rite of transfer of the blessed sacrament may not be carried out if the liturgy of the Lord’s Passion will not be celebrated in that same church on the following day.

55. The blessed sacrament should be reserved in a closed tabernacle or pyx. Under no circumstances may it be exposed in a monstrance.

The place where the tabernacle or pyx is situated must not be made to resemble a tomb; and the expression tomb is to be avoided for the chapel of repose is not prepared so as to represent the “Lord’s burial” but for the custody of the eucharistic bread that will be distributed in communion on Good Friday.

56. The faithful should be encouraged after the Mass of the Lord’s Supper to spend a suitable period of time during the night in the church in adoration before the blessed sacrament that has been solemnly reserved. Where appropriate, this prolonged eucharistic adoration may be accompanied by the reading of some part of the Gospel of St. John (Chaps. 13-17).

From midnight onward, however, the adoration should be made without external solemnity, for the day of the Lord’s Passion has begun.

57. After Mass the altar should be stripped. It is fitting that any crosses in the church be covered with a red or purple veil, unless they have already been veiled on the Saturday.
Celebrating Christlike Service

The focus on service at the Holy Thursday liturgy becomes obvious in the foot washing ceremony, and the letter's affirmation of this ceremony's importance further emphasizes the dimension of service. The letter does not stress the fullness of the ritual sign, unfortunately, for it is important to really do the foot washing, not merely pretend. Washing both feet with real water and drying them is part and parcel of offering service. A symbolic statement loses its power when efficiency robs it of its own message.

Service in charity is also emphasized by the collection of money for the poor—preferably the fruit of Lenten fasting—and the sending of ministers from the assembly to take the eucharist of this celebration to the sick or imprisoned who could not be present (#52, 53). This act unites them to this praying assembly in the body and blood of Christ, but this service is merely a show unless the sick are regularly attended by ministers and the community understands the importance of bringing the eucharist of this gathering to them.

The loving service of Christ is further exemplified in the Holy Thursday liturgy by those who stay to watch and wait in the presence of the blessed sacrament until midnight. Such watching is a prayer for the faith community and a way of expressing special love to the church by waiting with her and her Lord on this night and in the great night of waiting at the Vigil on Holy Saturday.

Holy Thursday and the Rest of the Triduum

The Holy Thursday liturgy must be seen in its context as the first part of the triduum; the rest of the celebration follows the experience of Holy Thursday, which should set all the “right tones.” Such a sense of beginning is created by ringing bells during the singing of the Gloria and then stilling them until that hymn is repeated at the Vigil, thus linking these two parts of the whole (#50). Furthermore, the instruction limiting the use of instrumental music applies not only to Holy Thursday but also to Good Friday and Holy Saturday, even through the first part of the Vigil.

The omission of the final blessing on Holy Thursday, replacing it by processing with the eucharist to the place of reservation, clearly indicates the “unfinishedness” of the evening’s liturgy, and bringing communion to the Good Friday liturgy from the Holy Thursday eucharist links the two ceremonies as parts of the same celebration. It is important to note (#54) that the transfer of the blessed sacrament is not to occur if the Good Friday liturgy is not being celebrated in the same church on the next day.

Solemnity and Simplicity, Joy and Sorrow

The paradox inherent in every celebration of the eucharist—the sorrow of Jesus’ death and the glory of his resurrection—is especially poignant on Holy Thursday. The whole triduum seeks to keep these elements in tension, but Easter moves dramatically to the joy side and Good Friday into Holy Saturday leans heavily toward the sorrow. Holy Thursday strives to capture both aspects by taking us to the core of the tension created by these conflicting emotions. The joyful ringing of bells as we sing the Gloria shortly after a gathering-hymn that calls us to glory in the cross of Christ contrasts sharply with the demands of service reflected in more somber music, the Scripture readings, and the foot washing ceremony, and it contrasts even more sharply with the sorrow reflected in the somber night of prayer, the simple adornment of the reservation place, and the stripped church. Anyone who truly rides the “spiritual roller coaster” of Holy Thursday knows the hard work that liturgical prayer demands of us.

Megaparish, U.S.A.

The circular letter offers some very helpful reminders about celebrating Holy Thursday, but it does so in response to reported abuses, and that causes the Congregation to emphasize some less important aspects and ignore more important ones. This may leave many people confused about what is really important in the triduum celebrations.

As is the case with many documents from Rome, this letter does little or nothing to take into consideration a celebrating community larger than two or three hundred people. In the community I serve we regularly gather between five and six thousand people each Sunday, and nearly ten thousand of us gather for Easter, with only two resident priests. These facts have a definite impact on the way we prepare and celebrate the paschal feasts.

The “megaparish” is relatively new to the United States, but it will not be long in spreading to more and more U.S. dioceses. Yet little or nothing is being written about ways to adapt the ritual that must necessarily take place in such large congregations. As liturgist in our ever-growing parish (we presently have over 150 inquiry members, and our adult formation classes have 600 people), I believe that people who study the rites and the theology behind them are urgent if we are to make adaptations that give life to our celebrations. Clarifications from the Congregation for Divine Worship are needed and welcome as part of that process, and the correction of genuine abuses will help the universal church retain her unity of worship. One would hope that the authors of such documents take the time to participate in the celebrations they are seeking to correct, so that they truly understand the nature of the faith community they are attempting to serve.
You might call the Congregation of Divine Worship’s ritual directives for Good Friday “Getting Back to Basics.” While there is very little added to the present order as found in the Sacramentary, there is a notable re-emphasis of particular elements that have been in place since the 1955 revision of Holy Week—important gestures and symbols, rich in their beauty and grace, which are significant to the Good Friday celebration’s power to communicate and express our faith and feelings about the paschal event. What one senses in these directives, then, is a concern for present practice.

The most notable points of re-emphasis are the initial prostration of the ministers (#65); the concern that the homily “should be” given (#66)—as opposed to “may be” in the Sacramentary; the re-

Good ritual often relies on familiarity with the gestures, words, and symbols, as well as the ways they are opened up to our senses and experience.

V. Good Friday

58. On this day, when “Christ, our passover was sacrificed,” the church meditates on the Passion of her Lord and Spouse, adores the cross, commemorates her origin from the side of Christ asleep on the cross and intercedes for the salvation of the whole world.

59. On this day, in accordance with ancient tradition, the church does not celebrate the eucharist: Holy communion is distributed to the faithful during the celebration of the Lord’s Passion alone, though it may be brought at any time of the day to the sick who cannot take part in the celebration.

60. Good Friday is a day of penance to be observed as of obligation in the whole church, and indeed through abstinence and fasting.

Veneration of the Cross at St. Anselm’s Abbey, Washington, DC.

Familiarity vs. Creativity

The emphasis placed on these “ancient traditions,” as the Congregation calls them, reminds us of an important truth about ritual: Good ritual often relies on familiarity with the gestures, words, and symbols, as well as the ways they are opened up to our senses and experience.

We may wish, therefore, to give some thought to what “creativity” means as we approach our preparation for the assembly’s ritual. Creativity does not necessarily mean “reinventing the wheel” each year. By its nature the Good Friday liturgy is unique, and though it is celebrated only once a year, people remember its particular actions and gestures. They are simple and powerful, especially when done well. The elements presented to us for this liturgy provide a fitting way to cele-
bbrate our Savior’s death and resurrection. Yet the Congregation's letter implies that people are writing their own ritual, and in doing so are opting to delete or downplay elements that are traditionally integral and important to the nature of the celebration.

After a few years of planning Good Friday at my last parish, we arrived at a way of celebrating the established elements that touched the heart of the paschal mystery. More importantly, the liturgy touched people—and they told us so. It was good. That liturgy is now a parish tradition, and every year the community looks forward to that ritual moment because they remember it. The people can enter into the liturgy, and their familiarity with its structure frees them to celebrate with mind and heart and spirit. They do not have to be concerned with what’s next or what we’re going to do now, which can so often be the undoing of celebration.

The wrong attitude to creativity is personified in a presider who is compelled to begin each part of the service with this statement: “Now we are going to (ritual element named), by which we (ritual element explained); so let us (choreographic direction).” One can imagine what such commentary does to prayer. A worship aid that does the same thing in print is not much better, because it keeps the faithful glued to the “aid”—a misnomer in this case. Such printed commentaries are not a help but an apology for leading people through the unfamiliar waters of a “new and improved” liturgy. Good liturgy speaks for itself; traditions take root. Familiarity can free people to pray and to experience the mystery.

“Now we are going to (ritual element named), by which we (ritual element explained); so let us (choreographic direction).”

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61. All celebration of the sacraments on this day is strictly prohibited, except for the sacraments of penance and anointing of the sick. Funerals are to be celebrated without singing, music or the tolling of bells.

62. It is recommended that on this day the office of readings and morning prayer be celebrated with the participation of the people in the churches (cf. No. 40).

63. The celebration of the Lord’s Passion is to take place in the afternoon, at about 3 o’clock. The time will be chosen as shall seem most appropriate for pastoral reasons in order to allow the people to assemble more easily, for example, shortly after midday or in the late evening, however, not later than 9 o’clock.

64. The order for the celebration of the Lord’s Passion (the Liturgy of the Word, the adoration of the cross and holy communion), that stems from an ancient tradition of the church, should be observed faithfully and religiously, and may not be changed by anyone on his own initiative.

65. The priest and ministers proceed to the altar in silence and without any singing. If any words of introduction are to be said, they

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Lift High the Cross

When one thinks of the Good Friday liturgy, the veneration of the cross rightly comes to mind as the most memorable element. It is the most dramatic part of the ritual, as personal as it is communal. As we ponder and celebrate the mystery of the cross, that powerful symbol not only moves us to triumphant joy at our Savior’s victory, it also becomes a catharsis for our own suffering and death as Christ’s mystery penetrates our lives and illuminates our human experience.

The document speaks of using a single cross of “appropriate size and beauty” (#68). “Size” and “beauty” are relative terms. Scale relates to the entire worship space, the distance from the symbol to the assembly and the relationship to the human scale. “Beauty” does not relate to the materials of which the cross is made; the “old, rugged cross” can certainly be beautiful. The truly “beautiful” evokes a response, either positive or negative, and leads the
behavior to penetrate on a deeper level that which is actually seen.

The Sacramentary states: "In the United States, more crosses may be used, if the number venerating is large." I have always found this compromise disappointing (and it seems that the Congregation agrees with me); it undermines the power of the symbol and the action of the entire assembly approaching the one cross, especially as the additional crosses are usually smaller and visually less attractive.

The Congregation's letter asks us to ponder the choice between experience and expedience. This is where true creativity is called for. How can a large number of people venerate a single cross and do so for a duration that does not become burdensome or cause the liturgy to bog down? I offer this possibility for your consideration: What if the cross were moved so that it could be easily taken apart in two or three pieces, so that all could venerate it during the service? For people who want to spend more time meditating privately on the mystery of the cross, the document offers some suggestions for private veneration of the cross after the Good Friday service, continuing even through the day on Saturday (#71, 74, and 76).

The Congregation refers to the communion rite on Good Friday as an "ancient tradition," and so it is, but it is not the most ancient tradition. Some of the suggestions made about the communion rite can actually continue the dramatic nature of the service of veneration. It is recommended, for instance, that the Lord's Prayer be sung (a familiar melody, please). If the parish does not normally make some gesture during this prayer—holding hands or raising hands together—this might be a good day to encourage such action, since the people gathered for Holy Week services are usually there because they want to be and are therefore a bit more homogeneous and involved in the service. Is not vocal participation much better generally on these days? It is interesting that Adrian Nocent points out in The Liturgical Year (2:72) a connection between the veneration of the cross and the communion rite. "According to the old Ordo 31," he writes, "the faithful kissed the cross immediately after receiving communion. The adoration of the cross and the reception of communion were thus brought into close proximity and became, in effect, a single action."

should be pronounced before the ministers enter.

The priest and ministers make a reverence to the altar, prostrating themselves. This act of prostration, which is proper to the rite of the day, should be strictly observed for it signifies both the abasement of "earthly man," and also the grief and sorrow of the church.

The faithful, for their part, as the ministers enter should be standing and thereafter should kneel in silent prayer.

66. The readings are to be read in their entirety. The responsorial psalm and the chant before the Gospel are to be sung in the usual manner. The narrative of the Lord's Passion according to John is sung or read in the way prescribed for the previous Sunday (cf. No. 33). After the reading of the Passion, a homily should be given, at the end of which the faithful may be invited to spend a short time in meditation.69

67. The general intercessions are to follow the wording and form handed down by ancient tradition, maintaining the full range of intentions so as to signify clearly the universal effect of the Passion of Christ, who hung on the cross for the salvation of the whole world. In case of grave public necessity the local ordinary may permit or prescribe the adding of special intentions.70

In this event it is permitted to the priest to select from the prayers of the missal those more appropriate to local circumstances in such a way, however, that the series follows the rule for general intercessions.71

For veneration of the cross let a cross be used that is of appropriate size and beauty, and let one or the other of the forms for this rite as found in the Roman Missal be followed. The rite should be carried out with the splendor worthy of the mystery of our salvation: Both the invitation pronounced at the unveiling of the cross and the people's response should be made in song, and a period of respectful silence is to be observed after each act of veneration, the celebrant standing and holding the raised cross.

69. The cross is to be presented to each of the faithful individually for their adoration, since the personal adoration of the cross is a most important feature in this celebration, and only when necessitated by large numbers of faithful present should the rite of veneration be made simultaneously by all present.72

Only one cross should be used for the veneration, as this contributes to the full symbolism of the rite. During the veneration of the cross, the antiphons, "reproaches" and hymns should be sung, so that the history of salvation be commemorated through song.73 Other appropriate songs may also be sung (cf. No. 42).

70. The priest sings the invitation to the Lord's Prayer, which is then sung by all. The sign of peace is not exchanged. The communion rite is as described in the missal.

During the distribution of communion, Psalm 21 or another suitable song may be sung. When communion has been distributed, the pyx is taken to a place prepared for it outside the church.

71. After the celebration the altar is stripped, the cross remaining, however, with four candles. An appropriate place (for example, the chapel of repose used for reservation of the eucharist on Maundy Thursday) can be prepared within the church, and there the Lord's cross is placed so that the faithful may venerate and kiss it, and spend some time in meditation.

72. Devotions, such as the Way of the Cross, procession of the Passion and commemorations of the sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary are not, for pastoral reasons, to be neglected. The texts and songs used, however, should be adapted to the spirit of the liturgy of this day. Such devotions should be assigned to a time of day that makes it quite clear that the liturgical celebration by its very nature far surpasses them in importance.74

VI. Holy Saturday

73. On Holy Saturday the church is as it were at the Lord's tomb, meditating on his passion and death, and on his descent into hell, and awaiting his resurrection with prayer and fasting. It is highly recommended that on this day the office of readings and morning prayer be celebrated with the participation of the people (cf. No. 40).75 Where this cannot be done, there should be
some celebration of the word of God or some act of devotion suited to the mystery celebrated this day.

74. The image of Christ crucified or lying in the tomb, or the descent into hell, which mystery Holy Saturday recalls, as also an image of the sorrowful Virgin Mary, can be placed in the church for the veneration of the faithful.

75. On this day, the church abstains strictly from celebration of the sacrifice of the Mass.²² Holy communion may only be given in the form of viaticum. The celebration of marriages is forbidden, as also the celebration of other sacraments, except those of penance and the anointing of the sick.

76. The faithful are to be instructed on the special character of Holy Saturday.²³ Festive customs and traditions associated with this day on account of the former practice of anticipating the Easter celebration on Holy Saturday should be reserved for Easter night and the day that follows.


63. 1 Cor 57.
64. Cf. Roman Missal, Good Friday, Celebration of the Lord’s Passion, 1, 3.
67. Cf. ibid., 3; Ordinatio et Decretiones Circa Ordinem Heiloomudae Sanctae Institutionis, 15.
68. Cf. ibid., 5, alternative prayer.
70. Cf. ibid., 12.
71. Cf. Roman Missal, General Instruction, 46.
72. Cf. Roman Missal, Good Friday, Celebration of the Lord’s Passion, 19.
73. Cf. Mi, 63-4.
77. Roman Missal, Holy Saturday.
78. Maximus Redemptionis Nostre Mysteria, 2.

Communion on Good Friday normally consists of sharing the bread consecrated on Holy Thursday. Nowhere have I experienced the wine being reserved and shared on Friday, but this is certainly a possibility: wine can easily be stored overnight. The shedding of Christ’s blood is a central image of the day, and there could be great benefit in the symbol of the shared cup as we celebrate the “blood of the lamb” poured out.

The document’s language certainly suggests a triumphant celebration of the cross, “carried out with the splendor worthy of the mystery of our salvation” (#68). This seems contrary to the usual approach to Good Friday as “the day Christ died.” Indeed we do remember and celebrate Christ’s death, yet we are ever aware as a postresurrection people that this event was neither defeat nor destruction, but our salvation and glory. When we celebrate the Christ mystery we do not so much remember the historical events as look to their deeper significance and meaning. This is our reason for joy and celebration. The texts to be sung during the veneration of the cross, even the “re-

approaches,” speak to this triumphant mood.

Friday is a day of great and mixed emotions, so there may be some confusion about what we should be feeling. The Congregation’s letter seems to handle the confusion by separating the emphasis—triumph on Friday, with Saturday picking up the underlying sorrowful tone of the preceding day. Yet the rite as we now have it, and even the Congregation’s description, “flip-flops” between sadness and joy. This indecision attests to the reality that these emotions cannot be easily separated or even manipulated to apply to precise moments. Sorrow and joy, after all, are frequently one reality in lived experience, and the cross itself embodies the breadth of these emotions. Such mixed emotions, then, are not some kind of liturgical schizophrenia in need of correction, but life—our life and Jesus’ life—as we experience it in its fullness.

If we do arrange our services to move from triumph on Friday to sorrow on Saturday, from veneration of the exalted cross to a stripped church building in which we watch “as it were at the Lord’s tomb” (#73), we may find the order of emotions unlikely, but do we not repeat this order every time we celebrate a funeral liturgy? Family and church gather in the midst of their grief to celebrate the triumph of resurrection, but people surely leave the funeral Mass with mixed emotions, and they finally end the rite at a very potent and emotional station: the grave.

Hope and joy do not diminish our grief and sense of loss or tragedy. We would never deny these feelings to the grieving family, nor does the church’s ritual deny them to us, Christ’s “spouse” (#58). Indeed, any good ritual does not seek to define or limit the range of our human response. It provides a framework by which we are enabled to enter into the mystery with our hearts, minds, spirit, and faith; it allows us to express and experience the full breadth of our faith and feelings.

On the face of it, Good Friday appears to be a day marked by a simplicity of symbol and action, yet it is quite complex in meaning and emotion. The day itself symbolizes the irony of life’s opposites. The Congregation for Divine Worship, in re-emphasizing the care to be taken with the prescribed symbols, actions, and gestures, reminds us of the potency in good ritual brought to life by the assembly and its ministers.
Whenever I hear that there is a new document from Rome, I shudder. In this time when a new rubricism seems to be creeping up everywhere, it is easy to suspect that another Roman document will mean nothing more than repressive directives that take two steps backward for every step forward. I am happy that this is not the case with the circular letter on “Preparing and Celebrating the Paschal Feasts.” And nowhere is that happy truth more evident than in the section dealing with Holy Saturday and the celebration of the Easter Vigil. My task is to explore what that section of the document is about and to flesh out some of its very worthwhile suggestions.

The person who reads this letter quickly, without a great deal of reflection, might be struck by the negative language in this section. But do not be fooled; there is good reasoning behind the carefully chosen phrases. Many abuses of this most sacred of vigils have occurred over the last ten years. I remember giving a workshop at a parish in the midwest where the Vigil was celebrated at 5:00 p.m. on Holy Saturday night, long before the sun had set. When I discussed this practice with the parish staff, their attitude betrayed the American malaise of efficiency and lack of appreciation for the symbolic power of this, or perhaps any, celebration. While the example is extreme, it suggests the wider lack of respect for symbol and ritual prevalent in far too many parishes.

Let the fire be lit so that as people approach the church they can see it proclaiming the beginning of our freedom celebration.

This section of the document tries to combat these abuses by stressing smooth, full, and noble celebrations of the rites as the best way to communicate their meaning (#82). The instructions point out the need to recover carefully the celebration’s meaning as a time of waiting and preparation for the

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Rev. Richard Lawrencet lighting the new fire, St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Baltimore, MD. Photo courtesy of Denise Walker.
VII. Easter Sunday of the Lord’s Resurrection

a) The Easter Vigil

77. According to a most ancient tradition, this night is “one of vigil for the Lord,” and the vigil celebrated during it to commemorate that holy night when the Lord rose from the dead is regarded as the “mother of all vigils.” For in that night the church keeps vigil, waiting for the resurrection of the Lord, and celebrates the sacraments of Christian initiation.

1. The Meaning of the Nocturnal Character of the Easter Vigil

78. “The entire celebration of the Easter Vigil takes place at night. It should not begin before nightfall; it should end before daybreak on Sunday.” This rule is to be taken according to its strictest sense. Reprehensible are those abuses and practices which have crept in many places in violation of this rule, whereby the Easter Vigil is celebrated at the time of day that it is customary to celebrate anticipated Sunday Masses.

Those reasons which have been advanced in some quarters for the anticipation of the Easter Vigil, such as lack of public order, are not put forward in connection with Christmas night nor other gatherings of various kinds.

79. The Passover vigil, in which the Hebrews kept watch for the Lord’s Passover, which was to free them from slavery to pharaoh, is an annual commemoration. It prefigured the true Pasch of Christ that was to come, the night that is of true liberation, in which “destroying the bonds of death, Christ rose as victor from the depths.”

80. From the very outset the church has celebrated that annual Pasch, which is the solemnity of solemnities, above all by the means of a night vigil. For the resurrection of Christ is the foundation of our faith and hope, and through baptism and confirmation we are inserted into the paschal mystery of Christ, dying, buried and raised with him, and with him we shall also reign.

The full meaning of vigil is a waiting for the coming of the Lord.

2. The Structure of the Easter Vigil and the Significance of Its Different Elements and Parts

81. The order for the Easter Vigil is so arranged so that after the service of light and the Easter proclamation (which is the first part of the Vigil), the church meditates on the wonderful works which the Lord God wrought for his people from the earliest times (the second part or Liturgy of the Word) to the present moment, with those new members reborn in baptism (third part), she is called to the table prepared by the Lord for his church, the commemoration of his death and resurrection, until he comes (fourth part).

This liturgical order must not be changed by anyone on his own initiative.

82. The first part consists of symbolic acts and gestures which require that they be performed in all their fullness and nobility so that their meaning, as explained by the introductory words of the celebrant and the liturgical prayers, may be truly understood by the faithful.

Insofar as possible, a suitable place should be prepared outside the church for the blessing of the new fire, whose flames should be such that they genuinely dispel the darkness and light up the night.

The paschal candle should be prepared, which for effective symbolism must be made of wax, never be artificial, be renewed each year, be only one in number and be of sufficiently large size so that it may evoke the truth that Christ is the light of the world. It is blessed with the signs and words prescribed in the missal or by the conference of bishops.

83. The procession by which the people enter the church should be led by the light of the paschal candle alone. Just as the children of Israel were guided at night by a pillar of fire, so similarly Christians follow the risen Christ. There is no reason why each response “Thanks be to God” should not be added some acclamations in honor of Christ.

The light from the paschal candle should be gradually passed to the candles which it is fitting that all present should hold in their hands.

Lord’s resurrection and as a time to celebrate the sacraments of Christian initiation (#77). After pointing out the noble character of this Vigil and issuing careful instructions that under no circumstances should it begin before the setting of the sun (#78), the letter offers a careful analysis of the celebration’s four sections.

A Noble Beginning

The words describing the first part of the ritual are so beautiful they are worth repeating: “The first part consists of symbolic acts and gestures which require that they be performed in all their fullness and nobility so that their meaning, as explained by the introductory words of the celebrant and the liturgical prayers, may be truly understood by the faithful” (#82). These words combined with the next three paragraphs give pastors, liturgists, and musicians a great deal to chew on.

The fire first: Ideally it should be located outside the church and be large enough that it truly dispels the darkness. It is time to stop lighting small hibachis at the head of the main aisle in a semidarkened church. Let the rich burning of the fire break into the night; let the fire be lit so that as people approach the church they can see it proclaiming the beginning of our freedom celebration. One prominent liturgical designer has suggested that a special place—a rather large stone bowl—be set up permanently with a plaque on it that describes this as the place where the Easter fire is lit.

Presiders need to take great care to proclaim the rich and powerful words that accompany this opening ritual in a manner befitting the text. Their enthusiasm must surely be stronger than that of the announcer who tells us that “Flight #707 is now ready for boarding.” The rich language of the Vigil demands an energy worthy of proclaiming that the feast of liberation is at hand.

The document only hints at the quality of the Easter candle, but here is an opportunity for real artistry and craft. There is no need to purchase the “$29.95-off-the-rack model” when people in the parish might make a candle that would be much worthier of the celebration and more reflective of the character of the people who gather.

Musicians need to fine-tune their craft for the procession, its attending chants, and the singing of the Easter
proclamation. Here the document shines. It speaks of extending acclama
tions and of looking for more ways to involve the assembly in the Easter pro-
cclamation. A rich collection of compositions already tries to do this. Musicians
need to explore settings of the process
del and the Easter proclamation by
Everet Freese, Marty Haugen, and Tom
Conry (to name but a few). Of particu-
lar interest is Tom Conry's introduct
ion to his setting of the Easter Procla-
mination (Oregon Catholic Press): it is quite
effective when chanted as the procession
of ministers approaches the new fire.

Liturgists have ample room to ex-
plor ways to involve the assembly
more intimately in the procession of
light. One example: Those who gather
might prepare their own candles to be
lit at this time and again for the renewal
of baptismal promises.

Ancient Recollections,
Present Proclamation

The opening ritual begs for the full-
ness of symbolic gesture, but it is really
a preliminary act leading toward the second
part of the Vigil, the celebration of the
word of God. This is when we tell our
story from ancient recollection to resur-
rection proclamation. The restored or-
der gives ample opportunity for pastoral planning according to the
needs and situations of the individual
communities gathered for celebration.

Strong emphasis is placed on the mu-
sical nature of the responses and the
need for contemporary composers to
bring their best efforts to bear on these
texts. The goal is not simply singing for
the sake of singing, of course—getting
through the texts by using a melody
based on psalm tone 8C to do the job.
Rather musicians must search out the
very best compositions for these
psalms, settings that not only serve
their liturgical function well but also
highlight the integrity of the musical
craft.

The document suggests ringing bells
at the "Glory to God." Once again par-
ishes can explore a fuller, richer use of
that symbolism. Instead of limiting
the ringing to the efforts of two altar
servers, why not ring many bells located
throughout the church? Better yet, why
not do as some parishes do, and invite
the entire assembly to bring bells from
home to add to the festivity?

When it describes intoning the Easter
Alleluia, the letter suggests that the pre-
the electric lighting being switched
off.

84. The deacon makes the Easter
proclamation, which tells by means
of a great poetic text the whole Eas-
ter mystery placed in the context of
the economy of salvation. In case of
necessity, where there is no deacon
and the celebrating priest is unable
to sing it, a cantor may do so. The
bishops conferences may adapt this
proclamation by inserting into it ac-
clamations from the people.89

85. The readings from Sacred
Scripture constitute the second part
of the vigil. They give an account of
the outstanding deeds of the history
of salvation, which the faithful are
helped to meditate calmly upon by the
singing of the responsorial psalm, by a silent pause and by the celebra-
nt's prayer.

The restored order for the vigil
has seven readings from the Old
Testament, chosen from the law
and the prophets, which are everywhere
in use according to the most ancient
tradition of East and West, and two
readings from the New Testament,
namely: from the apostle and from
the Gospel. Thus the church, begin-
nning with Moses and all the proph-
ets,90 explains Christ's paschal mys-
tery.90 Consequently, wherever this
is possible all the readings should
be read in order that the character of
the Easter Vigil, which demands
that it be somewhat prolonged, be
respected at all costs.

Where, however, pastoral condi-
tions require that the number of
readings be reduced, there should
be at least three readings from the
Old Testament, taken from the law
and the prophets, and the reading
from Exodus 14 with its canticle
must never be omitted.91

86. The typological import of the
Old Testament texts is rooted in the
New and is made plain by the prayer
pronounced by the celebrat-
ing priest after each reading; but it
will also be helpful to introduce the
people to the meaning of each read-
ing by means of a brief introduction.
This introduction may be given by
the priest himself or by a deacon.

National or diocesan liturgical
commissions will prepare aids for
pastors.

Each reading is followed by the
singing of a psalm, to which the peo-
ple respond.

Melodies should be provided for
these responses, which are capable
of promoting the people's participa-
tion and devotion.92 Great care is to
be taken that trivial songs do not
take the place of the psalms.

87. After the readings from the
Old Testament, the hymn "Gloria in
Excelsis," the bells are rung in accor-
dance with local custom, the collect
is recited and the celebration moves
on to the readings from the New
Testament. There is read an exhorta-
tion from the apostle on baptism as
an insertion into Christ's paschal
mystery.

Then all stand, and the priest in-
tones the Alleluia three times, each
time raising the pitch. The people re-
pet it after him.93 If it is necessary,
the psalmist or cantor may sing the
Alleluia, which the people then take
up as an acclamation to be inters-
persed between the verses of Psalm
117, which is so often cited by the
apostles in their Easter preaching.94
Finally the resurrection of the
Lord is proclaimed from the Gospel
as the high point of the whole Lit-
urgy of the Word. After the Gospel a
homily is to be given, no matter how
brief.

88. The third part of the vigil is the
baptismal liturgy. Christ's passover
and ours is now celebrated. This is
given full expression in those
churches which have a baptismal
font and more so when the Christian
initiation of adults is held or at least
the baptism of infants.95 Even if
there are no candidates for baptism,
the blessing of baptismal water
should still take place in parish
churches. If this blessing does not
take place at the baptismal font
but in the sanctuary, baptismal
water should be carried afterward
to the baptismery, there to be kept
throughout the whole of paschal
time.96 Where there are neither can-
didates for baptism nor any need to
bless the font, baptism should be
consecrated by a blessing of
water destined for sprinkling upon
the people.97

89. Next follows the renewal of
baptismal promises, introduced by
some words on the part of the cele-
brating priest. The faithful reply to
the questions put to them, standing
and holding lighted candles in their
hand. They are then sprinkled with
water. In this way the gestures and
words recall to them the baptism they have received. The celebrating priest sprinkles the people by passing through the main part of the church while all sing the antiphon "Vidi Aquam" or another suitable song of a baptismal character.

90. The celebration of the eucharist forms the fourth part of the vigil and marks its high point, for it is in the fullest sense the Easter sacrament, that is to say, the commemoration of the sacrifice of the cross and the presence of the risen Christ, the completion of Christian initiation and the foretaste of the eternal Pasch.

91. Great care should be taken that this eucharistic liturgy is not celebrated in haste; indeed, all the rites and words must be given their full force: the general intercessions in which for the first time the neophytes now as members of the faithful exercise their priesthood, the procession at the offertory in which the neophytes, if there are any, take part; the first, second, or third eucharistic prayer, preferably sung, with their proper embolisms; and finally eucharistic communion, as the moment of full participation in the mystery that is being celebrated. It is appropriate that at communion there be sung Psalm 117 with the antiphon "Pascha Nostrum" or Psalm 33 with the antiphon "Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia" or some other song of Easter exultation.

92. It is fitting that in the communion of the Easter Vigil full expression be given to the symbolism of the eucharist, namely by consuming the eucharist under the species of both bread and wine. The local ordinaries will consider the appropriateness of such a concession and its ramifications.

3. Some Pastoral Considerations

93. The Easter Vigil liturgy should be celebrated in such a way as to offer to the Christian people the riches of the prayers and rites. It is therefore important that authenticity be respected, that the participation of the faithful be promoted and that the celebration should not take place without servers, readers and choir exercising their role.

94. It would be desirable if on occasion provision were made for several communities to assemble in one church wherever their proximity to another or small numbers mean that a full and festive celebration could not otherwise take place.

The celebration of the Easter Vigil for special groups is not to be encouraged, since above all in this vigil the faithful should come together as one and should experience a sense of ecclesial community.

The faithful who are absent from their parish on vacation should be urged to participate in the liturgical celebration in the place where they happen to be.

95. In announcements concerning the Easter Vigil care should be taken not to present it as the concluding period of Holy Saturday, but rather it should be stressed that the Easter Vigil is celebrated "during Easter night," and that it is one single act of worship. Pastors should be advised that in giving catechesis to the people they should be taught to participate in the vigil in its entirety.

96. For a better celebration of the Easter Vigil, it is necessary that pastors themselves have an even deeper knowledge of both text and rites so as to give a proper mystagogical catechesis to the people.


80. St. Augustine, Sermon 219, PL 38, 1088.
81. Ceremonial of Bishops, 332.
82. Cf. ibid.; Roman Missal, The Easter Vigil, 3.
83. Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery, 28.
84. Roman Missal, Easter Vigil, 19.
85. Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 6; cf. Rom. 6:3-6; Eph. 2:5-6; Col. 2:12-13; 2 Tm. 2:11-12.
86. "We keep vigil on that night because the Lord rose from the dead; that life... where there is no longer the sleep of death, began for us in his flesh; being thus risen, death will be no more nor have dominion... If we have kept vigil for the risen one, he will see that we shall reign with him forever." St. Augustine, Sermo 21, 2, PL 38, 332.
88. Cf. ibid., 10:12

Cascading Waters

Following the homily (and there should be one, even if it is brief—#87) we begin the third part of the celebration, the baptismal liturgy. As always in preparation for this night, careful planning is in order here. The crucial matter is that the rites demand a rich use of water: be lavish in using this central symbol of the resurrection and of this vigil celebration. A simple but effective method of highlighting the water while the presider prays its blessing is to have a deacon or an assisting minister lift the water in their hands and let it fall back again and again like a cascading waterfall.

The renewal of baptismal promises and the attendant sprinkling of the congregation must be done with care. Ministers must walk to everyone and sprinkle everyone. Let the renewal of baptismal promises really become the crowning moment of all the preparations in the Lenten season.

Not in Haste

The treatment of the final section of the celebration—the eucharist—begins at #90. The letter highlights the fact that this part above all must not be "celebrated in haste" (#91), for despite all that has gone before, this is the "high point" of the Vigil, the "Easter sacra-
The rich language of the Vigil demands an energy worthy of proclaiming that the feast of liberation is at hand.

Weaknesses and Strengths

If there is a weakness in the document’s section on the Easter Vigil it is in the area of commentaries and explanations. Several things need to be kept in mind about spoken or printed commentaries. The first is that nothing teaches as well as good ritual done with care and filled with conviction. The second is that explanations of the entire paschal celebration can be presented well in advance of ceremonies through good use of the parish bulletin. And the third point is that any comments made during the celebration should be governed by the great rule, “Less is more.” The strength of this letter lies in three areas. First, it gives strong backing to maintaining the integrity of the Vigil celebration. Second, it strongly supports the use of good music and creativity in music. Third, it puts the Easter Vigil in perspective. I think that one of the problems we are beginning to encounter is an overtaking of the full celebration of Easter by the celebration of the Vigil. The Vigil is the central celebration of the resurrection, of course, but it should not subsume the full celebration of Easter Sunday as the day of victory or the “Great Sunday” of the fifty days of the Easter Season. What we do in the nightwatch on Holy Saturday is the completion of the Lenten journey and the high point of the triduum, but it is also the great gateway to the rest of Easter Sunday and the Easter season.
Great credit and thanks should be given to those who have participated in restoring the true meaning of Lent and the triduum.

VII. Easter Sunday of the Lord’s Resurrection

b) Easter Day

97. Mass is to be celebrated on Easter Day with great solemnity. It is appropriate that the penitential rite on this day take the form of a sprinkling with water blessed at the vigil, during which the antiphon “Vidi Aquam” or some other song of baptismal character should be sung. The fonts at the entrance to the church should also be filled with the same water.

98. The tradition of celebrating baptismal Vespers on Easter Day with the singing of psalms during the procession to the font should be maintained where it is still in force, and as appropriate restored.

99. The paschal candle has its proper place either by the ambo or by the altar and should be lit at least in all the more solemn liturgical celebrations of the season until Pentecost Sunday, whether at Mass or at morning and evening prayer. After the Easter season the candle should be kept with honor in the baptistery, so that in the celebration of baptism the candles of the baptized may be lit from [it]. In the celebration of funerals the paschal candle should be placed near the coffin to indicate that the death of a Christian is his own passover. The paschal candle should not otherwise be lit nor placed in the sanctuary outside the Easter season.

Much the same now needs to be done with the fifty days of Easter, and this letter is a modest contribution to that process. We are substantially better at anticipating something than celebrating the ongoings of the event. This truth is manifested throughout western culture from weddings where the bride and groom leave halfway through the reception to the American Christmas, which begins before Thanksgiving and ends promptly on December 25th.

So we have maintained a great and substantial theoretical understanding of the importance of the Easter season, but in practice we do not have an on-going religious celebration of Easter. One possible reason for this up to the present, in addition to our cultural practices, has been the absence of neophytes, whose presence would make the traditions we have inherited make sense. Easter is the postbaptismal season, but for centuries we have tried to live Easter without baptism.

The circular letter from the Congregation for Divine Worship does a fine job of commenting on what takes place up to and including the celebration of the Easter Vigil, but it is much sketchier in discussing the Easter season, and it raises many more questions than it answers. Approaching the season this way is honest, and the Congregation is to be commended, for it cannot comment well on a subject so underdeveloped and ripe for exploration. What it does say gives the needed exploration both the impetus and direction we should expect from this Congregation.

Easter Comes Despite Exhaustion

Three paragraphs of the letter (#97-99) deal with Easter Sunday itself. They comment on the importance of the day continuing the celebration of the night before and emphasize, as the letter also does in #82, the significant position in which the paschal candle is to be placed.

What these paragraphs cannot comment on is the reality of exhausted ministers, tired from days of planning and celebration, who must draw on deeply held resources to be “up” for Easter Sunday celebrations that are almost antithetical for them. Yet these services are Easter for vast numbers of people, for merged with the faithful are those who come to church on this day, but on few others. All too often what these people experience is a Mass with missing ministers, tired homilists, and used music. Or everything is done so well that it is clear that in this parish the Easter Vigil was not treated as the focus of the Easter celebration, but only a regular Saturday night Mass.

Parishes must devote great time and attention to Easter Sunday with the honest realization that the community gathered for these celebrations is not the same community that has celebrated the Easter Vigil. Those places that have created a special core of people who treat Easter Sunday morning as a unique opportunity for evangelization, hospitality, care, and concern have done well in bringing a new meaning to the renewal of baptismal promises on that day.

As we continue working to bring the beautiful and powerful Easter Vigil to full prominence, we cannot allow Easter Sunday to fall into decline. The fact is, however, that with rare exceptions the same people who lead the triduum will not have the strength to minister well on Easter Sunday.

Business as Usual

The letter places a mild stress on the importance of the Sundays of Easter (#100-01), but with one exception there is barely a mention of the Easter octave. These facts reflect the sad reality that there are few places that do more after Easter Sunday than revert back to the
regular weekday schedules existing before Ash Wednesday. We can change that reality, but to do so requires us to look very differently at what the Easter weekday celebrations should be and should include—certainly during the week between Easter and "Low" Sunday (the Second Sunday of Easter). At the very least, one way to begin making the octave of Easter different than other weeks is to celebrate the liturgy of the hours.

The letter's comments on the Easter Sundays include this statement: "Celebrations in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary or the saints which fall during the week may not be transferred to one of these Sundays" (#101). While the Congregation is most likely pinpointing groups that have May traditions honoring Mary, the statement applies to other traditions as well, such as the way we celebrate Mother's Day in the United States. On the one hand, Mother's Day does not appear as a feast in the liturgical calendar, so it should not interfere with the Sunday celebration. On the other hand, it is probably an event being celebrated or commemorated in one way or another by all the people attending Mass that day, so there is pressure to include this theme in the liturgy. There is no easy answer to the problem; these secular feasts and their liturgical impact need much more study.

**Mystagogia, the Missing Feast, and Other Practices**

The materials about the neophytes and the importance of mystagogia are

**Some parishes treat Easter Sunday morning as a unique opportunity for evangelization, hospitality, care, and concern.**

---

**VIII. Easter Time**

100. The celebration of Easter is prolonged throughout the Easter season. The 50 days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost Sunday are celebrated as one feast day, the "great Sunday." 

101. The Sundays of this season are regarded as Sundays of Easter and so termed, and they have precedence over all feasts of the Lord and over all solemnities. Solemnities that fall on one of these Sundays are anticipated on the Saturday. Celebrations in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary or the saints which fall during the week may not be transferred to one of these Sundays.

102. For adults who have received Christian initiation during the Easter Vigil, the whole of this period is given over to mystagogical catechesis. Therefore, wherever there are neophytes the prescriptions of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Nos. 37-40 and 235-239, should be observed. [Editor's Note: These numbers refer to the Latin text. In the American adaptation of the RCIA, they are nos. 244-47 and 246, 248-251.] Intercession should be made in the eucharistic prayer for the newly baptized through the Easter octave in all places.

103. Throughout the Easter season, the neophytes should be assigned their own special place among the faithful. All neophytes should endeavor to participate at Mass along with their godparents. In the homily and, according to local circumstances, in the general intercessions mention should be made of them. Some celebration should be held to conclude the period of mystagogical catechesis on or about Pentecost Sunday, depending upon local custom. It is also appropriate that children receive their first communion on one or other of the Sundays of Easter.

104. During Easter time, pastors should instruct the faithful who have been already initiated into the eucharist on the meaning of the church's precept concerning the reception of holy communion during this period. It is also highly recommended that communion be brought to the sick also, especially during the Easter octave.
105. Where there is the custom of blessing houses in celebration of the resurrection, this blessing is to be imparted after the solemnity of Easter, and not before, by the parish priest or other priests or deacons delegated by him. This is an opportunity for exercising a pastoral ministry. The parish priest should go to each house for the purpose of undertaking a pastoral visitation of each family. There he will speak with the residents, spend a few moments with them in prayer using texts to be found in the Bock of Blessings. In larger cities consideration should be given to the gathering of several families for a common celebration of the blessing for all.

106. According to the differing circumstances of places and people, there are found a number of popular practices linked to celebrations of the Easter season, which in some instances attract greater numbers of people than the sacred liturgy itself; these are not in any way to be undervalued, for they are often well adapted to the religious mentality of the faithful. Let episcopal conferences and local ordinaries, therefore, see to it that practices of this kind, which seem to nourish popular piety, be harmonized in the best way possible with the sacred liturgy, be imbued more distinctly with the spirit of the liturgy, in some way derived from it, and lead people to it.  

107. This sacred period of 50 days concludes with Pentecost Sunday, when the gift of the Holy Spirit to the apostles, the beginning of the church and the start of its mission to all tongues and peoples and nations are commemorated.  

Encouragement should be given to the prolonged celebration of Mass in the form of a vigil whose character is not baptismal as in the Easter Vigil, but is one of urgent prayer, after the example of the apostles and disciples, who persevered together in prayer with Mary, the mother of Jesus, as they awaited the Holy Spirit.

108. "It is proper to the paschal festivity that the whole church rejoices at the forgiveness of sins, which is not only for those who are reborn in holy baptism, but also for those who have long been numbered among the adopted child of a vigil whose character is not baptismal... but is one of urgent prayer..." Urgent prayer could be an excellent description of how Christians can and should pray for our concerns and the world around us, but I must admit that I do not know how the character of urgent prayer differs from other prayer, despite the suggestions made in the footnote. Are we being invited to experiment with an all-night prayer, or forms of dance, or new modes of adoration, or what?

The RCIA calls for the close of post-baptismal catechism “at the end of the Easter season near Pentecost Sunday” with “some sort of celebration” (RCIA #249). The rite leaves lots of room for creativity, suggesting only that “festivities in keeping with local custom may accompany the occasion.” The circular letter paraphrases that statement (#103). It adds no further suggestions, but the paraphrase causes a problem,
for it contains the phrase “on or about Pentecost Sunday.” The RCIA is fairly clear that whatever celebrations take place, they should not necessarily fall on Pentecost itself.

The letter concludes with two quotations that offer further possibilities for pastoral reflection and development, but they also reflect the problems this letter poses. The first is a quotation from St. Leo the Great reminding us that “the whole church rejoices at the forgiveness of sins” (#108). Leo says that this festival celebration of forgiveness applies to the newly baptized and also to “those who have long been numbered among the adopted children,” but the letter gives no indication how this theme should be integrated or expressed in the Easter season.

And repeating the themes that have run through this whole letter, its authors adapt some phrases from the opening prayer for Saturday of Easter’s seventh week to say: “By means of a more intensive pastoral care and a deeper spiritual effort, all who celebrate the Easter feasts will by the Lord’s grace experience their effect in their daily lives.”


Cardinal Paul Augustine Mayer
Prefect
Archbishop Virgilio Noe
Secretary


103. Cf. General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours, 213.
105. Cf. General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar, 22.
106. Cf. ibid., 5, 23.
107. Cf. ibid., 88.
111. Book of Blessings, Chaps. 1, 2; Blessing of a Family in Its Own Home.
113. Cf. General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar, 23.
114. It is possible to combine the celebration of First Vespers with the celebration of Mass as provided for in the General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours, 96; in order to throw into greater relief the mystery of this day, it is possible to have several readings from Holy Scripture, as proposed in the Lectionary. In this case, after the collect the reader goes to the ambo to proclaim the reading. The psalmist or cantor sings the psalm, to which the people respond with the refrain: Then all stand and the priest says, “Let us pray,” and after a short pause, he says the prayer corresponding to the reading (for example, one of the collects for the ferias of the seventh week of Easter).
115. St. Leo the Great, Sermo 6 de Quadragesima, 1-2, PL 54, 285.
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Reviews

Drama

Tales of Wonder


“In the beginning” there was an invitation to prepare one of the Quartet presentations for the 1989 NPM Convention at Long Beach. Since Marty Haugen received this invitation in November 1988, there simply wasn’t time to write, arrange, record, and publish a completely new major work. So as many composers in similar situations have done over the centuries, Marty borrowed and rearranged to come up with one of the more memorable performances at Long Beach.

The music published in the songbook really doesn’t reflect the full experience of Tales of Wonder, so this review will also include considerations of the audio and videotapes of the Convention performance. But even listening to or watching the tapes will not explain the apparent anomalies in this work. For instance, why is the narrator dressed in a grass skirt, though there is no Hawaiian music? Why is there such an incredible diversity of musical styles in this performance work? The answers stem from Haugen’s purpose: He describes the work as a celebration of the oral storytelling tradition. So he includes elements from cultures that have strong storytelling traditions, among them Hawaiian, African American, Hispanic, and Swedish (Haugen’s own ancestry).

What gives the piece value beyond Convention entertainment is its flexibility and accessibility. A parish that would like to put on Godspell or Celebration, but recognizes that it does not have the resources for such a major production, will find in Tales of Wonder a work that can be performed effectively with a minimum of resources.

The recorded versions of the songs reinforce things I have always appreciated about Marty Haugen’s music: his melodic gifts, good voice leading and choral arranging, his ability to deal with more than one musical style, his choice of and sensitivity to timbre and text, and his clarity of articulation. The sound recordings are first class, as are Joe Conmacco and Pam Smith as the storytellers and principal voice soloists. Unfortunately the video, taped in a situation with minimum performing area and inadequate lighting, is fifth class. Tria Thompson’s choreography is energetic, but for me the most memorable part of the choreography is Bob Verhecke’s sensitive portrayal of Job in “Where Is Your Mercy?” Although the work can be performed without the choreography, the choreographic ideas are probably the principal value of the videotape.

The songs deserve individual comment. The opening song, “The Storyteller,” sets a wonderful mood, especially on the tape with the Hawaiian story being told in the background. The musical character changes abruptly at the refrain, when the song takes on an archetypal Christian rock sound. “Creation” is a fun piece with a great bass line and good writing that paraphrases the Genesis story in “a driving gospel rhythm.” It would make a good teaching/concert piece for elementary schools. “One Ohana” (“One Great Family”) would be a wonderful work to include in a children’s prayer service centering on the creation story.

The integration of the narrator’s text with Job’s lament works very well in “Where Is Your Mercy?”. Haugen’s text is excellent; the musical writing is neo-Barry Manilow. The Vivaldisque harmonies and melodic sequences in the refrain sound great the first couple of times, but they have a cloying effect by the fifth repetition.

“Against the Grain” is the first of two songs in the collection by Donna Peña. The text would fit wonderfully on days when you wish to highlight peace, justice, and our personal or public mission as Christians. The song uses a characteristic Latin American musical style, enhanced on the recordings by the use of the sung Spanish “chant,” while a narrator slowly reads a translation. This is a well-written song with a text that carries a powerful message. “I Say ‘Yes,’ Lord,” the other song by Donna Peña, is a great piece for the assembly to sing (it is also available as an octavo). It is easy to pick up the melody of the frequent interjection “I say yes, my Lord,” and the refrain is easy to sing and harmonize. It works well for Hispanic and non-Hispanic communities and as a bilingual song for mixed-language communities. The accompaniment is like a slow rock ballad. This song could be used for the commissioning of ministers, confirmation, or a general community affirmation of commitment to Christ. Brava, Donna! “Many Are the Lightbeams” is a simple Swedish song adapted and arranged by Haugen; it would be effective with children or adults at a celebration of Christian unity. Once I got past the throbbing drums on the recording of “Send Down the Fire” and began to appreciate the text and music, I found it a very serviceable piece for confirmations, Pentecost, or any celebration of the Holy Spirit; it could also be used effectively as a gathering song for eucharist.

The familiar text of “When in Our Music God Is Glorified” is set to a light and lilting tune that could be used by contemporary or traditional ensembles. Though it lacks the majesty of other familiar settings, it has a vitality and energy that assemblies will enjoy sharing. This is an easy piece to sing, and the descant and modulation up a whole step for the last verse add a real sparkle that creates a dramatic conclusion. This setting is also available as an octavo. Finally, “All You Works of God” treats the Genesis story as “a celebration of all of God’s creation” and would be especially effective with children. The melody is simple compared to the rhythmically active accompaniment, and the verses have interjections for the community.

For the most part I do not agree with the liturgical uses of the songs suggested in the songbook. Substituting a “driving gospel” song for the Genesis reading at the Easter Vigil, for instance, would work only if your community regularly prays and praises in a pop musical style.

Even though Marty Haugen had only five months to produce this work, it is
still an effective piece, for all its musical and literary eclecticism. Tales of Wonder shows that we need to commit to our major composers the time and commissions necessary to produce more works in this genre. Its value lies not in its potential to be liturgical music for some, but in its flexibility to be pastoral music for all.

Joe Koestner

Religious Education

This Is Our Faith

Separate records, cassettes, and teacher’s songbook for each grade 1-6. Record $9.95. Cassette $9.95. Teacher’s Songbook $2.95. Comprehensive Students’ Hymnal (Grades 1-6) $2.95. Program Director’s Manual $25.00. Silver Burdett & Ginn.

Sing in Christ Jesus


Music used in a catechetical program has a different purpose than music used in sacred liturgy. This Is Our Faith and Sing in Christ Jesus are primarily catechetical music programs for use in classrooms, but each also has some use in worship.

The This Is Our Faith music program is designed for use with the This Is Our Faith religious education series. The music program contains a teacher’s songbook, cassettes, and records for grades 1-6, as well as a comprehensive children’s hymnal and program director’s manual. The teacher’s songbooks are designed to be used with the recordings to help the teachers familiarize themselves with the songs before teaching them to their class. Each songbook explains how to teach a song to a class and contains suggestions for rhythm accompaniment and movement. Although the recordings are of high quality, the program encourages live performance of the songs rather than singing with a tape. The program director’s manual contains piano accompaniments for all the songs in the series along with descants, harmonies, and instrumental parts for students to play. The music in this series is composed by David Haas, Marty Haugen, Patrick Loomis, Jack Muffleton, Ray Repp, and Christopher Walker, among others.

Several songs are useful in liturgical celebrations as well as in the classroom. Two examples from the grade two book are “Children of God,” by Michael Lynch, and “Jesus You Are Bread for Us,” by Christopher Walker. The tunes are simple, and the texts present theology in concrete terms accessible to young Christians. It is important that there be some relationship between the classroom and the sanctuary, and the Silver Burdett & Ginn music program provides a link through music that can be used in both settings.

Sing in Christ Jesus is designed for use with the In Christ Jesus religion series.

The materials come in a boxed kit that contains a cassette tape for each grade level (1-8) and a spiral-bound director’s guide to aid in implementing the music program. The cassettes contain performances of all the songs found in the director’s guide, and the guide contains explanations of each song’s scriptural and catechetical background, a liturgical planning guide, theme and grade indexes, and an index for seasons and special events.

The program is thorough and flexible. “In Christ Jesus,” for example, is a song included at every grade level. The accompanying book is laid out systematically, with convenient page turns and instrumental parts after each keyboard accompaniment—but be prepared to spend some time practicing the keyboard accompaniment. The Benziger Corporation was very careful in its preparation of this music program; it is a worthwhile resource for classroom and worship.

Michael Wustrow

Organ

Two by Mathias


These two volumes contain all but five of William Mathias’s (b. 1934) com-
former, the rewards are great for those who put forth the effort.

It is interesting to note the similarities in price between the Berceuse (twelve printed pages) and the Organ Album (thirty-three pages). Both volumes are highly recommended.

**Serenade and Pastorale**

No price given.

Admirers of Widor’s music will welcome the appearance of these two charming pieces arranged for organ. Unfortunately Mr. van Vliet did not provide critical notes, so we are left in the dark regarding the original scoring and sources for these arrangements. Whatever the original scoring, the present arrangements are idiomatic, and Mr. van Vliet’s registration suggestions might well serve to show off the solo stops of any organ to great advantage.

**Impressions on a French Noel for Organ with Optional C-Instrument & Handbells**

Gabriel Fauré, arranged by Douglas Wagner. SM 392. $3.95. The Sacred Music Press.

This lovely setting by Fauré of the familiar French carol “Il est né le divin enfant” was originally scored for a unison vocal line accompanied by organ, harp, oboe, two violoncelli and contrabass. Mr. Wagner has arranged this work so that it can be performed in a variety of ways, including an organ solo, organ with C-instrument, and organ and handbells (three octaves) with or without the C-instrument. This piece would make a very nice Christmas Eve prelude.

Craig Cramer

**Church Documents**

General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar. The sixty-one paragraphs of this 1969 Vatican document provide the principles that govern the church’s observance of the various seasons and feasts. Paragraphs 18-21 concern the triduum. This document may be found in several places: at the front of the Sacramentary; in Norms Governing Liturgical Calendars from the Secretariat of the Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy (United States Catholic Conference, 1984, 168 pages, $6.95), pages 13-24; or in The Liturgy Documents: A Parish Resource (Liturgy Training Publications, 1985, 320 pages, $6.95), pages 183-95.

Preparing and Celebrating the Paschal Feasts. This circular letter from the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship is the subject of the articles in this issue of Pastoral Music, and the main body of the official English translation

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**Books**

**Resources for Preparing the Three Days**

Pastoral musicians and others who prepare the liturgies of the triduum have been aided in recent years by a growing number of resources that address this “culmination of the entire liturgical year” (General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar, #7).
Previously Reviewed Books

The following books have been reviewed in previous issues of Pastoral Music (PM) and Pastoral Music Notebook (NBK). Where applicable, I have noted the pages that directly concern the triduum. Each title is followed by a brief quote from the earlier review that gives a sense of the book's value.


Making More of Holy Week by Edmund Flood (Paulist Press, 85 pages, $3.95). “Flood’s text is a primer which would be of value to catechumens and to those who ‘sign up to help out during Lent.’ Choir members who are new to the Triduum experience will also benefit from this introductory text” (PM 9:3 [February-March 1985] 42).


The Holy Week Book edited by Eileen Elizabeth Freeman (Resource Publications, 1979, $19.95). “The quality of the selections covers a wide range; likewise the appeal and usefulness of the various items will not be uniform. However, the compositions generally manifest an awareness of actual parochial situations, a pastoral responsibility to such diverse situations, and a regular concern for aesthetic experience in the course of the liturgical celebrations” (PM 4:2 [December-January 1980] 55).

Planning Guide for Lent and Holy Week by William Hartgen (Pastoral Arts Associates, 1979, $4.95). “Most of the statements in this volume are sound, simply expressed and conducive to pastoral effectiveness. Several, however, are questionable” (PM 4:2 [December-January 1980] 54-5).

The Liturgical Year: Celebrating the Mystery of Christ and His Saints by the Secretariat of the Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy (United States Catholic Conference, 1985, 9 pages, $6.50), pages 49-53. “Pertinent sections from the General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar are reprinted, along with brief but helpful commentary” (NBK 12:6 [September 1988] 6).

Christ Living among His People: A Guide to Understanding and Celebrating the Liturgical Year by Robert Tuzik (Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, 1984, 33 pages, $8.95), pages 6-9. “Tuzik’s essays are readable, to the point, and contain some practical tips and ideas that parish liturgy teams will find helpful” (PM 9:5 [June-July 1985] 49).


The Liturgical Year 3: The Easter Season by Adrian Nocent (Liturgy Press, 1977, 326 pages, $10.00), pages 3-176. “Ample attention is given to the history, structure, and meaning of each part of the season” (NBK 12:6 [September 1988] 6).

Other Books

Jerusalem Revisited: The Liturgical Meaning of Holy Week by Kenneth Stevenson (The Pastoral Press, 1988, 104 pages, $6.95). This recent volume by the Anglican author Kenneth Stevenson neatly traces the development of the major elements of the Palm Sunday and triduum liturgies. Beyond the history, though, there are succinct discussions of various current pastoral issues related to the triduum.

Easter’s Fifty Days (Liturgical Conference, 1982, 74 pages, $9.95). This issue of Liturgy is devoted to the entire Easter season, although some of the articles address issues for the triduum. In addition to articles on the paschal candle and hospitality, there is a helpful discussion of Easter customs in the home (including a terrific recipe for Bananas Foster).

Hallowing the Time: Meditations on the Cycle of the Christian Liturgy by Geoffrey Preston (Paulist Press, 1980, 163 pages, $5.95), pages 99-117. These meditations by the late English Dominican spiritual writer might benefit the pastoral musician who approaches the triduum wondering “What’s it all about?” However, the author seems to miss some of the fundamental meaning of the triduum by failing to reflect in any significant way on Holy Thursday’s footwashing or on the Easter Vigil’s rites of initiation.

Rediscovering Passover: A Complete Guide for Christians by Joseph Stallings (Resource Publications, 1988, 352 pages, $11.95). Much research into the Passover context of the Last Supper is brought together in this book, along with some debatable assertions. It is hoped that the book will prod others to examine further the appropriateness of celebrating Seder meals in Christian families and parishes during or near the triduum.

Annual Publications

Sourcebook for Sundays and Seasons (Liturgy Training Publications, $9.95) and the magazines Today’s Liturgy and Liturgia y Cancion (Oregon Catholic Press, each $12.00/year) and Today’s Parish (Twenty-Third Publications, $20.00/year) complement the books in this bibliography by providing annually updated triduum suggestions from reputable authors.

Paul F. X. Covino

About Reviewers

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Publishers

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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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March 26-28
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FLORIDA

ORLANDO
February 2-3
Orlando Liturgical Music Conference. Speakers include Ashman Brown, Robert Hoeffner, David Clark Isel, Henry Liebersat, Dan Onley, Steven Warner. For additional information, write or call: Michael Bogdan, Office of Liturgy, 421 East Robinson, PO Box 1800, Orlando, FL 32802. (407) 425-3556.

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ROSEMONT
February 23-25
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MASSACHUSETTS

CAMBRIDGE
February 9-11
Liturgical dance workshop: In God We Live and Move and Have Our Being. Led by Skyloom, an interfaith liturgical dance group. Site: The Guest House, Cowley Fathers, 980 Memorial Drive, Cambridge, MA 02138. For program information, call Shirley Blancke at (508) 369-6833 or Sybile Volz at (617) 861-8849.

MISSOURI

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DOUGLASTON
March 3

NEW YORK CITY
March 9-10

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April 29
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Roundelay 2

BY BENET WELLUMS

Lent is an annual opportunity for traditional aerobics, spontaneous parades, and fast-forward singing. I refer, of course, to the pious devotion known as the “way of the cross” or the stations. This practice originally developed along with some others as a way for those without the necessary time or money to share in a pilgrimage to the holy land. It eventually replaced even the popular Jerusalem maze, in which participants wandered through a maze planted in the cathedral floor from its beginning (“Vos isti”—“You are here”) to the maze’s center, Jerusalem. (Some of these mazes still exist in European cathedrals.)

The way of the cross imitated the actions of pilgrims once they had arrived in Jerusalem, visiting the sites associated with Jesus’ suffering and death. Originally, scholars tell us, the route contained only two stops, a beginning at the site of Herod’s palace, where Pontius Pilate probably resided when he condemned Jesus to death, and an ending at the rock of Calvary, outside the ancient city walls. Gradually various stations were added, and at one point the Jerusalem way of the cross contained twenty stations.

After the Islamic capture of Jerusalem and the destruction of many ancient sites, different legends sprang up about the actual location of the sites along the way to Calvary, so that in a given Holy Week in the twelfth century, you could have watched various groups of pilgrims tracing five different “ways of the cross” through Jerusalem’s narrow streets. All of them eventually wound up at the site of what the Crusaders could salvage of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, the great Constantinian church that had covered and protected the rock of Calvary and the burial tomb of Jesus, but that common goal led to other problems. The various rites and churches (Syrian, Greek Orthodox, Latin, and the rest) each claimed a section of the basilica and denied others the right of access to their “turf.” This led to the wonderful witness of Christians bashing other Christians over the head with the large crosses that led their processions.

Meanwhile, back in Europe, the churches of the Latin rite eventually settled on fourteen stations along the way of the cross, and that’s the form most familiar to us (with the possible addition these days of a “resurrection” station). This form was popularized by the Franciscans in the fifteenth century, and Alphonsus Ligouri gave it an added boost with his set of stational devotions.

While the stations were modernized in many places as a result of the liturgical reform, we haven’t forgotten our ancient, feisty ancestors bashing one another’s heads around the most sacred site in Christendom. Since we are too civilized to beat up on one another physically (in public, anyway), we have found more spiritual ways to remember those ancient battles.

We begin, in many places, by forming three processions. The first procession consists of the crucifer and acolytes who, at least on the first few Lenten Fridays, come out of the sanctuary and turn the wrong way, pointing themselves toward the fourteenth station instead of the first. The second procession consists of the priest (or deacon) and his attendants, who ignore the lead of the altar servers and head the right way, toward “The First Station: Pilate Condemns Jesus to Death. We adore you, O Christ . . .” The third procession fills the pews: the people engage in liturgical gymnastics as they try to turn to face the appropriate station, turn back to genuflect and later to kneel (thus bashing their knees in an early form of the step exercise now gaining popularity in the secular world), and keep a wary eye on the cantor (up front) and the wandering first procession (somewhere around the eighth station by now, but headed toward home).

Lest the liturgical reformers be left out, they managed to get into the game early, beating up on the congregation (innocent bystanders always suffer, it seems). First came the “scriptural” way of the cross, containing more biblical readings for one service than the assembly was likely to hear on all the Lenten Sundays. Now don’t think it wasn’t hard to come up with appropriate texts to go with three falls, Veronica’s veil, and other nonscriptural stations; of course, it did take some stretching of the texts . . .

The second form of congregation bashing came from the demand that we sing all the verses of a hymn because, after all, the lyricist composed the poem as a whole, so its full meaning frequently doesn’t appear until the final stanza. The traditional hymn for the way of the cross, with a verse sung between each station, was the “Stabat Mater,” “At the Cross Her Station Keeping.” In its familiar incarnation in the St. Gregory Hymnal, this hymn had twenty stanzas. There were fourteen stations. The authentic tradition seemed to require double-time singing to get through all the verses, especially since the stations were placed so close together on the church walls. So here we go: “At the cross her station keeping stood the mournful mother weeping close to Jesus’ throne,” And so on.

One final indignity in the updating of this devotion was a bit of legalistic legedonman. It seemed that the real stations were not the carvings, mosaics, or paintings, but the little wooden crosses that adorned the top of these representations. Therefore, the reasoning went, we should restore the authentic tradition. Away with the schlock art that had nursed the devotion of generations! Enlarge the little wooden crosses; make them GREAT BIG wooden crosses in order to leave room for the imagination to reconstruct the scene.

Fortunately for the sake of piety, such madnesses lasted only a short time in most places. The pictures came back or were replaced by different, not necessarily better, art; the number of verses of the Stabat Mater was reduced (there are fifteen in the latest Worship), and the texts to be proclaimed were considerably shortened. Some places even created outdoor stations so that in good weather at least, people could actually move from one station to another. Imagine that.

Dr. Benet Wellums is the pen name of several worthy NPM members whose contributions to this column are otherwise anonymous.
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Commentary

Be Sure to Read the Footnotes

BY JOHN M. HUELS, O.S.M.

Paschalis solemnitatis, the January 16, 1988, document of the Congregation for Divine Worship, is a “circular letter” that was sent to the presidents of episcopal conferences and presidents of national liturgical commissions. A circular letter is an executive or administrative document. In canon law a distinction is made among legislative, executive, and judicial powers. The congregations of the Roman curia belong to the “executive branch” of the Holy See, that is, they assist in administering the affairs of the universal church, and they execute the laws enacted by the “legislator”—the pope or an ecumenical council. The curial congregations are not themselves legislative; they cannot make new laws unless expressly delegated by the pope.

This is not to say that an executive document is not binding—it is, just as directives and policies of the executive branch of the civil government are binding on citizens. But the law is more basic, providing the more important constitutive and disciplinary measures that give orientation and direction to the executors and

Some norms are not meant to be applied without reference to local customs and needs.

Servite Father John M. Huels is associate professor of canon law at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. An expert in liturgical law, he has authored five books and has contributed numerous articles and reviews to scholarly and pastoral journals.
when the interpretation of the liturgical books is unclear, the interpretations given in this circular letter are to be preferred over other interpretations.

For example, in #42 the document lists several parts of the liturgy “which can never be done without singing.” The rubrics of the Roman Missal do not precisely state this so forcefully, although that is certainly the intention of the law. In this case the circular letter has enfolded the implicit meaning of the liturgical law to make it obvious that the texts in question must never be recited, but only sung. This “interpretation” or clarification by the circular letter does not change the liturgical law but reinforces it with an even stronger and clearer statement of what the law expects here of its ministers and assemblies.

Another problem in the document is the repeated citations from the 1984 Ceremonial of Bishops. The Ceremonial is a liturgical book consisting of many norms gathered together for the convenience of those who must plan and direct ceremonies at which a bishop presides. It is questionable why the Ceremonial, intended for this restricted audience, should become a major source for a circular letter that also deals with ceremonies at which presbyters preside. In any event, as stated in the decree promulgating the Ceremonial, its norms are not meant to be applied without reference to local customs and needs.

An example may be helpful. Paschalis sollemnitatis, #17 and 25, states that musical instruments may only be played during Lent to give necessary support to the singing, except on Laetare Sunday, solemnities, and feasts. The footnotes for both citations refer to the Ceremonial of Bishops. If this provision were to be understood in an absolute sense, then it would admit of no exceptions, and instrumental solos would always be excluded during Lent except on the days indicated. However, when one recognizes that the source of this directive is the Ceremonial, which is open to adaptations according to local customs and needs, then it is properly understood as giving general advice rather than forbidding a specific practice in all cases. In some situations (for example, during the offertory collection) a suitable instrumental solo might well enhance the penitential character of Lent in a way that a protracted and distracted silence could not.

A basic familiarity with the rules and principles of canonical interpretation can be most helpful in assisting liturgical specialists and practitioners to apply intelligently and pastorally the church’s liturgical laws and documents.3

Problem Statements and Citations

In light of these principles, there is a rather perplexing claim made in #5 of Paschalis sollemnitatis: “Other matters which are given in the liturgical books concerning Lent, Holy Week, the Easter triduum and paschal time retain their full force unless otherwise interpreted in this document” (italics mine). An executive document cannot revoke or change liturgical law; only the legislator himself (the pope) can abrogate or change universal law. What this statement likely means is that,

1. The English title is “Preparing and Celebrating the Paschal Feasts.”

2. For further discussion of the system of liturgical law and its interpretation, the reader is referred to the author’s pamphlet, Liturgical Law: An Introduction. This booklet is #4 in the series, “American Essays in Liturgy,” edited by Edward Foley. That series is now available from The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN 56321.
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