

National Catechetical Directory — Chapter 8

1. The interrelationship of catechesis and liturgy must be remembered so that both can more perfectly fulfill their purposes.

2. Programs of catechesis about the liturgy should include instruction about signs and symbols.

3. The quality of liturgical celebration determines the catechetical effectiveness of the liturgy.

4. Home liturgies possess unique possibilities for catechesis and spiritual growth.

5. Those involved in working with children in the catechetical apostolate should be familiar with the Directory for Masses with children and should take advantage of those approaches it recommends.

6. Through a variety of types of liturgical celebrations and a variety of musical and liturgical styles young people can be introduced to the richness of Catholic liturgical traditions.

7. Paraliturgies are valuable catechetical experiences.

8. Catechists must always treat liturgy as an end in itself. In so doing they will find that liturgy catechizes most effectively.

9. The involvement of the faith community in Baptism is most important.

10. Preparation of the adult for Christian initiation should include a catechesis of the sacraments of confirmation and the Eucharist as an integral part of the preparation.

11. A catechesis of the sacrament of baptism and the role of parents in the child's growth in faith should be required for the parents prior to baptism.

12. The preparation of young people for confirmation should involve the parents.

13. Preparation of children for First Communion should involve parents, and they, the priest and the catechist are responsible for determining when a child is ready to receive.

14. Preparation for First Confession should be conducted separately from First Communion.

15. Instruction on the religious meaning of marriage and its relationship to problems in marriage should be given prior to the ceremony. The couple should participate in planning the marriage ceremony.

16. The meaning of Holy Orders and religious life in the Church should be part of a regular catechesis.

17. With regard to First Confession the child should have access to the Sacrament of Penance prior to First Communion, but should also have the freedom to delay First Confession.

18. Parents, the catechist and the priest are involved in determining when First Confession should take place.

19. There should be a life-long development of moral education and the Sacrament of Penance.

20. Catechesis related to the Sacrament of Anointing should stress the potential of acquiring spiritual strength, the role of suffering and the possibilities of healing.

21. Personal, communal prayer, and other devotions should be included in catechetical programs.

Chapter Eight: Liturgy and Catechesis

By Sister Margaret Mary Mattle

As the opening section of Chapter Eight says so well, "Liturgy is an experience of faith, it is an act of faith expressed and celebrated by the believing community and this act enables faith to grow in those who participate in the liturgy."

Such a statement underlines the catechetical need of a people formed in an experience of formal liturgical ritual that was rooted in a rich historical tradition but allowed to become out of touch with their daily human experience of life.

The question it puts before catechists and liturgists continually challenges any attempts at renewal: how do we enable our people to develop and express their faith naturally, according to the known laws of human growth? In ways that will make their lives and liturgies more vital expressions of their total human experience, both personally and communally?

Any Christian liturgy, whether it is a simple celebration of the Word of God by small children learning that the Bible is a living book, or whether it is a formal Eucharist celebrated in the cathedral church with the bishop surrounded by representatives of every region in the diocese, any Christian liturgy pre-supposes a believing community expressing their relationship with God and one another in a human experience.

Much of the problem of liturgical renewal stems from the failure to deal with the fact that these basic presuppositions — presuppositions which are fundamental to catechesis — cannot, after all, be taken for granted. It is very possible and indeed, quite evident in many of our parishes, that:

1. The faith of those gathered is of many levels and may not be adequate to enter fully into sacramental celebration.

Holy Family Plans Fete

The Holy Family Rosary Society will install its new officers at a banquet at Tuts Villa, 2200 Buffalo Road on Wednesday May 14 at 7 p.m. Mrs. John Bernola is chairman.

Reservations may be made by calling Mrs. Walter Andrews at 458-3384 or Mrs. Milton Ritzenthaler at 458-6035. Deadline is Wednesday, May 7. Guest speaker will be Father Louis Sirianni who was formerly at Holy Family.

Officers to be seated are Mrs. Joseph Campione, president; Mrs. Albert Brunette, vice president; Mrs. Nicholas Giambra, recording secretary; Mrs. George Kohlmeier, trustee; Mrs. Douglas Berry, treasurer; Mrs. Earl Sitter, financial secretary; and Mrs. Robert Spahn, publicity.

In the box above is the synopsis of the eighth chapter of the proposed National Catechetical Directory as prepared by the directory staff. Diocesan officials will give a critique of each of the nine chapters of the directory weekly in the Courier-Journal. The eighth chapter is analyzed by Sister Margaret Mary Mattle of the diocesan office of liturgy. Extra copies of the directory are available from the Office of Religious Education, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Any comments, suggestions or criticism also should be sent to that office.

2. Those gathered are not necessarily a community.

3. Participants in liturgy have, for the most part, a faith-experience of Christ that has not been integrated into their total human experience. For many, it is a merely intellectual adherence to truths about Christ, not an inner, personal knowing of Christ. And for many, their faith is expressed in certain specified ways that are separated from and not integrated with their daily life activities.

In pointing out that "the ideal manner of celebrating all sacraments is with the Christian community" and that "it should be by way of exception that sacraments are celebrated in isolation from the community," the directory highlights the fact that the communal element of celebration cannot, in fact, be taken for granted in the present practice of many of our parishes.

This concern is reinforced in a variety of ways throughout the chapter, especially in relation to the discussion of home liturgies and of the Sacraments of Initiation. Both of these sections emphasize the role of the family community in nourishing the larger communities of the parish and universal Church. In a society of anonymity and alienation the kind of interaction that can occur in small groups is necessary for personal growth and authenticity. Large parish churches, where people meet only occasionally and impersonally cannot easily nurture the kinds of real human friendship and concern that is the basis of the Christian community.

Underlining the emphasis on the need for healthy human expression of the faith experience are the sections on "Signs and

Symbols" and "New Art Forms" which stress meaningful communication through careful use of media and contemporary illustrative techniques, as well as the universal symbols of water, fire, oil, bread and wine, etc. The text hints at the problem of the loss of a sense of symbolism that is prevalent in this technological age, and points out the danger that, for many of our people, "liturgy easily becomes empty ritual" if they have lost familiarity with symbolic expression.

The section on "Paraliturgies" mentions the advantage of permitting "greater creativity and experimentation" because, "unlike official liturgy which is subject to ritual norms, the paraliturgies are more informal and open to considerable spontaneity." Such a point is well taken, but needs much greater development in the light of the overwhelming poverty of creativity and spontaneity in our liturgies.

The principles governing children's liturgies and spelled out so well in the Directory for Masses With Children (referred to in the NCD) are principles that should govern all preparation and formation in liturgy: "Simplification and adaptation to enable children to make faith responses according to their capacity." Would that the vigilant leadership of our Church would recognize that many people who are adults chronologically are children in the area of faith development, and need the same kind of "simplification and adaptation" recommended for those among us who are children in age!

Chapter Eight, in many ways, expresses important liturgical values and attempts to present a broad overview of liturgical celebration. This critique, however, illustrates what, for many liturgists, is a serious limitation of the section on liturgy: the primary principles of ritual celebration are not presented thoroughly or given adequate emphasis as fundamental to any discussion of this type. Instead, the central values which have been emphasized here are scattered indiscriminately throughout the document and are not immediately evident to the ordinary reader without a background of liturgical understanding.

A better format for the entire chapter would place a description of liturgy and an enumeration of the elements and kinds of ritual celebration at the very beginning, to be followed, not preceded, by an explanation

of the relationship of liturgy and catechesis. After this explanation, a discussion of the Eucharistic Liturgy and of the Celebration of the Sacraments would be more fully comprehended, and the awareness needed for proper catechesis would be more clear.

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