

Insights
In Liturgy

By Father
Robert J. Kennedy



Becoming
The Mystery

For the past two weeks, we have been considering the various stages of faith-growth as outlined in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). In the first stage, the period of Evangelization and Precatechumenate, we saw the first stirrings of faith in the mind and heart of an inquirer take shape through the sharing of personal stories of faith and the story of God's People. Last week, we saw how that infant faith is nourished and brought to maturity in the second stage, a period of faith formation known as the Catechumenate.

Once the catechumens have experienced "a conversion of mind and morals," gained a sufficient knowledge of Christian teaching and a sense of faith and charity (RCIA Number 23), they are ready to begin the third stage of the process of initiation, the period of Purification and Enlightenment. This is a time of more intense preparation of mind and heart (RCIA Number 22), which will climax in the celebration of Christian Initiation at the Easter Vigil.

This third stage coincides with the season of Lent, and it begins on the first Sunday of Lent with the celebration of the Rite of Election. Several weeks before Lent begins, the catechumens, after much reflection and prayer, present themselves to the Church as candidates for Baptism or reception into the Church. With the help of the sponsors and catechists, the parish staff decides the candidates' readiness and worthiness. When this is determined, "the Church makes the election, that is, the choice and admission of the catechumens who because of their dispositions are worthy to take part in the next celebration of the sacraments of initiation" (RCIA Number 22). The Church acts in the name of the Lord, who alone calls these ones into the mystery of himself. From this moment on, the candidates are known as "the elect."

The six weeks of Lent become a kind of retreat for the elect. The RCIA describes it as "a more intense preparation of the mind, which involves spiritual recollection more than catechesis" (Number 25). This recollection is intended to purify minds and hearts by the examination of conscience

and by repentance and "also to enlighten those minds and hearts by a deeper knowledge of Christ the Savior" (Number 25).

This preparation happens in several ways. First, the Lenten liturgies are a time of spiritual growth for the whole faith community, as well as for the elect. Lent makes them all ready to celebrate the paschal mystery which the sacraments of initiation apply to each individual.

In addition, there are special rites for the elect. There are the "scrutinies" which, despite their less than attractive name, are meant to be a positive examination of one's heart and faith in the light of the Sunday scriptures of the third, fourth, and fifth Sundays of Lent. The scrutinies are intended to reveal anything that is weak, defective or sinful so that it might be healed, and reveal what is upright, strong and holy so that it might be strengthened. These are done at the Sunday Eucharist so that the whole community may likewise scrutinize their hearts together with the elect.

And there are the "presentations" of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. In the profession of faith, the elect recall the wonderful work of God for our salvation; and in the Lord's Prayer, they acknowledge more firmly their status as God's children.

The election and the period of Purification and Enlightenment is described by the RCIA as the "turning point in the whole catechumenate" (Number 23) since it leads directly to initiation into the Church at the Easter Vigil. Here, in the holiest and most joyous celebration of the entire year, the elect come forward to be baptized and confirmed and to share in the Lord's Supper, or, if they have already been baptized, to renew their profession of faith, be confirmed, and to share in the Eucharist. Here they die with Christ and rise with him, and become a new creation in him and his life-giving Spirit. Here they are clothed with the love and life of Christ and become Christian in this washing with water, sealing with oil and sharing in the one bread and one cup. Here they become the mystery of Christ's love in the midst of their brothers and sisters.

But this is only the beginning!

School
Reopens

The Butler School of Irish Dance will resume lessons starting at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 16, at the Brighton Presbyterian Church hall, 1775 East Ave.

Students ages five through 15 years are welcome. For further information, call Mrs. Timothy O'Keefe, 663-8679.

Festival
Scheduled

Big Flats — The Mount Saviour Monastery Fall Festival will be this Sunday, Sept. 20.

Advertised as a day of quiet welcome for friends, the day will begin with Mass at 11 a.m.

NW Region
Schedules
Assembly

The Northwest Regional Assembly is scheduled for Friday and Saturday, Oct. 23-24, at Our Lady of Mercy Church, 600 Denise Road in Greece.

Priests and religious of 17 parishes, school principals, religious education coordinators, and parish council members will be offered a choice among nine workshops on matters of current interest. Parishioners generally, adults and teenagers, are invited to take part.

Also invited are personnel from the area Catholic high schools and from Park Ridge Hospital.

The opening meeting starts at 7:30 p.m. on Friday. The Saturday session will run from 10 a.m. to 2:45 p.m., when Bishop Matthew H. Clark will celebrate Mass.

The assembly is sponsored by the Diocesan Pastoral Office, and is under the coordination of Father Louis Vasile of St. Lawrence Church. The only fee is \$2 for Saturday's box lunch.

Wait Reduced
For Marriage

Couples can be married in as few as three days after their blood test and premarital examination by a physician because of new state legislation, according to City Clerk Patricia B. Adduci.

Legislation reducing the previous 10-day waiting period was signed by Gov. Carey in March. The three-day waiting period cannot include the day on which the blood test was performed.

Marriage licenses are issued in the City Clerk's Office, Room 300A, City Hall, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.



Volunteers

Michael McBride and Jim Smith, both of Rochester, were among the 282 college and high school men who volunteered their service this summer in areas served by Glenmary Home Missioners. McBride and Smith were part of a group from the diocese. Others were Steve Messmer of Interlaken, Martin Kenny of Fairport, Robert Tiballi of Penn Yan, Joe Giangreco and Robert Leyh of Rochester. The group worked in Eastern Kentucky.

Reading Group Sets Conference

Both parents and teachers will explore the world of children's reading at the Fall Reading Conference of the Rochester Area Council of the International Reading Association, 8 a.m. to 12:50 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 26, at Irondequoit High School.

A film, "Reading Begins at Home," will be shown throughout the conference. According to Sherry Schneider of the council, the movie "emphasizes that parents are a child's first and most important reading teacher," and explores techniques parents can use to encourage reading by children.

For the teachers, Norman Drake, teacher of Learning Improvement at Irondequoit, will speak on "Secondary Study Skills: a Systematic Approach," and Dr. George Rentsch, director of the Bureau of Field Services and professor in the Department of Educational Administration at the State University of New York at Brockport, will address the topic, "The Reading Teacher as a Staff Developer."

Keynote speaker for the day will be Dr. Daniel Fader, professor of English at the University of Michigan, author of several articles and the book, "New Hooked on Books."

Other speakers include Carol Otis Hurst, former editor of Early Years Magazine, instructor at the University of Connecticut and Westfield State College in Massachusetts; Dr. Dorothy

Menosky, associate professor at Jersey City State College; and Dr. Joan Suedmeyer, professor at Baldwin-Wallace College in Ohio.

Further information and pre-registration data is obtained by calling (716) 288-5997 after 5 p.m.

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