

Vatican Aide Cites 'Rules, Limits' on Theological Criticism

Dallas (NC) -- A top Vatican official cited "rules and limits" on theological criticism of church teachings at a meeting of 240 bishops from the Americas.

The bishops, from North and Central America and the Caribbean, were gathered in Dallas Feb. 6-9 for a four-day intensive study workshop on moral theology.

German-born Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, prefect of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, gave the keynote address Feb. 6 on "Bishops, Theologians and the Moral Life of the Church."

His address and the workshop sessions were closed to the press, and no interviews were scheduled during the four days.

While the text of Cardinal Ratzinger's speech was not immediately available, an outline distributed at the

workshop showed that one of the issues he addressed was the "rules and limits" theologians must follow regarding criticism of authoritative church teachings.

The outline also indicated that the cardinal said the task of the moral theologian was to carry on a critical dialogue with contemporary society's moral evaluations and to help the teaching office of the church to present its moral message to the world.

In his two-hour speech the cardinal also discussed objective reality, conscience, the community, and God's will and revelation as sources of moral knowledge.

U.S. Cardinal William Baum, prefect of the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education, also addressed the gathering.

Funded by the Knights of Columbus, the meeting was

the fourth seminar for members of the hierarchy by the Pope John XXIII Medical-Moral Research and Education Center.

The center, based in St. Louis, began the Dallas seminars in 1981 to educate the bishops on medical-moral-ethical issues that require a pastoral response.

Father William Gallagher, president of the center, said the focus on moral theology at this year's workshop came from the bishops themselves.

"This is probably the most important issue which is facing the church today," the priest said in an interview. "The fact that all these people are here means they are simply zeroing in on the importance that is attached to this issue of moral theology. How one 'does moral theology,' what kind of school you follow, determines your response to life and death."

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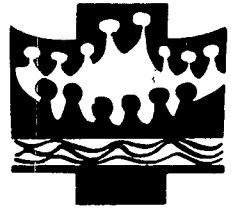
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Insights In Liturgy



By Maribeth Mancini
And Pam Schaeffer

Language Of RCIA And Lent

This week we will continue our exploration of the terms and rites that we use to help us describe the mood, activities and celebrations of the RCIA and Lent.

● **Cycle A Readings** — The Sunday scripture readings follow a three-year cycle (years A, B and C). This is year A in the Lectionary cycle. The Sunday readings for the season of Lent will be proclaimed from Cycle A which, by the way, are readings containing a strong baptismal focus. The readings from this cycle are the preferred texts for the Period of Purification and Enlightenment. They aid us in understanding what Baptism in faith means, and in examining the mystery of sin, suffering and salvation. They include the story of the Samaritan woman, curing the man born blind and Lazarus raised from the dead.

● **Easter Vigil** — The solemn, liturgical celebration of Easter at which the Elect are baptized, confirmed and receive Eucharist; the candidates for full communion are also received at this celebration of the "Night Watch" through their confirmation and reception of eucharist. Historically, the early Church began their celebration of the Easter Vigil in the dark of night and concluded with the rising of the sun. We would do well in our parishes if we looked at our scheduling of the Easter Vigil with this in mind!

● **Ephepheta** — The opening of the mouth and ears of the unbaptized so

they may hear and proclaim the Word, normally this rite is celebrated on Holy Saturday.

● **Godparent** — The witness at Election and the Sacraments of Initiation who is available as a guide and a companion in prayer throughout life. (RCIA, #43)

● **Holy Saturday** — The day before Easter, the daylight hours prior to the celebration of the Easter Vigil during which certain rituals take place for the Elect including: ephepheta; the anointing with the oil of catechumens; and the recitation of the creed.

● **Mystagogia** — The period for post-baptismal catechesis lasting throughout the remainder of the Easter season (until Pentecost). A time for plunging ever more deeply into the mystery of faith through participation in the sacraments, prayerful reflection on the Word, and opportunities to explore ministry to which baptism calls all Christians. (RCIA, #37 and #38)

● **Neophyte** — The newly baptized adult.

● **Pentecost** — Celebration of the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church. Formal end of the period of Mystagogia.

● **Period of Purification and Enlightenment** — The time during Lent, celebrated from the Rite of Election until the Easter Vigil. It is a time of spiritual retreat in preparation for the reception of the sacraments. It includes the celebration of the scrutinies, handing on of the Church's profession of faith, and the preparation rites for celebration of the sacraments. (RCIA, #25 and #26)

● **Presentations** — The Creed and Our Father are presented to the Elect as a

summary of Christian belief. They can be made either during the period of the Catechumenate or the Period of Enlightenment. (RCIA, #25)

● **Scrutinies** — These rituals are celebrated on the Third, Fourth and Fifth Sundays of Lent. They are a careful, inquiring look at the obstacles that might exist that would block a response to the message of Christ. Their investigative tone corresponds with the Cycle A readings described above. Through these public rites the candidates are able to discern that which is "...weak, defective, or sinful..." so that it may be healed; and to hold up that which is "...upright, strong, and holy, so that it may be strengthened." (RCIA, #25)

● **Sponsors** — Those people who accompany candidates throughout the catechumenate period until the rite of Election. They may also serve as Godparent. (RCIA, #42)

● **Mandatum** — Literally this means "command." It refers to Jesus' command that we do as he did, that is, lead a life of love and service. The clearest way we see this in ritual action is through the Foot Washing during the Triduum's Holy Thursday liturgy.

● **Passion Sunday** — This is the name given to the Sixth Sunday of Lent. We are probably more familiar with this Sunday being called "Palm Sunday." However, the revised liturgy sees this day not only as Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem but unites his joyful entry with his passion and death. With the reading of the Passion on this Sunday we mark the Church's entry into Holy Week.

● **Passover** — The Jewish celebration of God's loving kindness towards them in the Exodus. "It is the sacrifice of the Passover in honor of Yahweh who passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, and struck Egypt but spared our houses" (Exodus 12:27).