

To Hold in Trust...A Board Farewell

By Victoria M. Tufano, Chair, Board of Directors



Victoria M. Tufano

When I was the editor of *Catechumenate* magazine, I always held a special reverence for the authors whose biographical statements included the phrase “a member of the Board of Directors of the North American Forum on the Catechumenate.” So I was pretty surprised when I was invited to be considered for the Board, and surprised to be chosen.

Fast forward five years, and here I am, finishing my term as member and as chair for the last two years. In these years I have come to enjoy the give-and-take that board work requires, the creative tension (and I use the term positively, as in the tension of the strings of a musical instrument) between the Board and the executive director as we worked together. And I have been deeply moved by how committed the Board and executive director are to the mission.

During this time, we have begun to have one meeting each year on the home turf of one of the board members—San Jose, Chicago, and Ottawa, so far. These meetings have included a gathering of local initiation ministers for prayer and conversation about our shared vision.

And in 2008 we had a Convocation, Forum’s fifth such gathering. We held our collective breath, hoping that the terrible economy would not keep people away. But the delight of initiation ministers, anxious to have the chance to be together, and the generosity of our friends in the many publishing houses that support our work made it happen. What a great gathering of the Forum family, hundreds strong! I hope we have many more.

And speaking of the economy..., I would be less than frank to say anything other than that it has hit us hard, very hard. Forum’s history has been full of challenges, and we are in the midst of one. The Board and the executive director have been meticulous in doing our best to be good stewards in this lean time. We have good

The Mission of The North American Forum on the Catechumenate is the full implementation in all parishes of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and its implications for reconciliation.

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reason to hope: the number of institutes is up, our donors have been generous, and the leadership is envisioning and implementing new ways to continue the mission. But I would be remiss not to say: Please remember Forum in your gift-giving. Every donation, big or small, makes a great difference.

This has been a privileged moment in my life. I have had the chance to work with a dedicated group of people—characters, every one of them—for brief but

intense periods three times a year for five years. I am particularly grateful that my term coincided with that of Jim Field, who is also going off the Board. Jim and I studied liturgy at Notre Dame at the same time (the late 1970s—we were very young). Our lives have intersected many times since then, and I have always appreciated his wisdom, humor, and good sense. Serving with him has been a great perk!

Thanks, Forum, for this chance to serve. See you on the road at Forum institutes.

Reflection on Forum's “Concerning the Baptized” Institute

Two fellow team members and I attended the Concerning the Baptized Institute. This was especially important since personal plans were taking me away from St. Augustine Cathedral as the RCIA coordinator.

The institute offered us an opportunity to discuss, share, and plan how to implement what we had learned and how to inform the pastor and the faith community of the importance of remembering, acknowledging, recognizing, and valuing baptism already experienced. I believe that it also gave the team members confidence in how they might approach our pastor and ideas on how to incorporate what they learned into the RCIA process as well as into parish understanding of the process concerning the baptized.

Both team members concluded the institute by expressing that they truly understood the importance of recognizing the baptized and, from there, catechizing according to the best way to facilitate each candidate's awareness, sense of already belonging, and Christian gift and responsibility of responding to the baptismal call. We acknowledged how empowering this could be for the candidates' sense of Christian identity as well as facilitating opportunities to share their increasing understanding of their role as Catholic Christians with those preparing for baptism.

The institute provided an exciting opportunity to learn about other RCIA team challenges, collaborative efforts, creative ideas, mistakes, and inspiring experiences. I was grateful to share all of this with team members who were in the process of grieving with me my final days as coordinator. The modeled rites were very effective in offering visual “how to and why” as well as the opportunity to learn how these rituals affected the participants. The team will take these experiences with them and recommend that the rites unfold in the richest and most appropriate ways possible.

Susan Whitney, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

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Mission The North American Forum on the Catechumenate (Forum) is an international network of pastoral ministers, liturgists, catechists, and theologians united to share the vision and practice of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*.

Mission Statement The mission of The North American Forum on the Catechumenate is the full implementation in all parishes of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* and its implications for reconciliation.

Theological Foundation The Mission of Forum is grounded in a theology based on the experience of

- ◆ God's gracious initiative
- ◆ the paschal mystery of death and resurrection in Jesus Christ
- ◆ the prophetic power of word and sacrament
- ◆ the shared life and wisdom of the people of God, graced and sinful
- ◆ listening to the voice of the poor and oppressed
- ◆ conversion to the freedom of disciples
- ◆ working for justice and peace for the world

Formational Principles To remain faithful to the vision of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, Forum adheres to these principles:

- ◆ Initiation begins with evangelization leading to conversion.
- ◆ Catechesis, community, liturgy, and mission are formative.
- ◆ All cultural gifts are honored and celebrated.
- ◆ The methods of theological reflection are pastoral.

- ◆ The processes of adult learning are normative.

Organizational Traits Forum's operations, behaviors, attitudes, and actions exhibit these traits:

- ◆ Excellence: The highest level of competence, creativity, and professionalism are strived for at all times.
- ◆ Stewardship: Human, material, environmental, and financial resources are administered with responsibility and accountability.
- ◆ Respect: The precepts that all life is sacred, that each human being is unique, and that all deserve to be treated with dignity are affirmed in speech and action.
- ◆ Collaboration: Cooperation, consultation, communication, and networking are normative for all Forum projects.
- ◆ Inclusivity: Forum relies on the diversity of gifts among its members and proactively seeks a full range of diversity in all areas of its ministry.
- ◆ Integrity: Honesty, justice, and ethical behavior are hallmarks of Forum's work.

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Mystagogy-Weakest Period of the Initiation Process?

By Jim Schellman, Executive Director



Jim Schellman

Between 1997 and 2000 Forum assisted the U.S. Bishops' Conference in a national study on the implementation of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. Five U. S. Bishops' committees were involved in the study and are listed here as they were then named (the USCCB has since restructured its committees): Evangelization, Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, Education,

Liturgy, and Pastoral Practices.

The results of the study were published in 2000 in a 60-page report from the bishops entitled *Journey to the Fullness of Life* (available at www.naforum.org, click on Book Service). The report substantiates what is noted in its preface:

From the comments of the neophytes to the insights of the bishops in the survey responses, it is clear that the RCIA is one of the most successful elements of the renewed liturgy. As envisioned in the *General Directory for Catechesis*, the RCIA provides a comprehensive formation process that integrates evangelization, liturgy, catechesis, and the life of the local faith community, and it has the potential to renew parish life in our country. (*Journey*, p. vi)

This promise of the adult initiation rite continues to unfold in dioceses and parishes throughout the U.S., Canada, and beyond. As we move more deeply into the second generation of pastoral labor to implement the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* more fully, we do well periodically to revisit the U.S. bishops' report, *Journey to the Fullness of Life*, and to mine its insights about the first generation of work with the Rite.

One of those insights has to do with the Period of Mystagogy, which coincides with the Easter season.

Indeed, in the U.S. edition of the Rite the U.S. bishops ask for an extension of this period beyond Easter, ending with the anniversary of initiation the following year (see U.S. National Statute # 24). Several sections of *Journey* address the Period of Mystagogy, either directly or by implication. They draw upon the various sources of information gathered in the study.

What Those Initiated Had to Say

The Report's summary of the survey done of those who were initiated through the Rite is based upon about 700 individual responses. It notes that 54% of those initiated continued to meet with the other initiates after completion of initiation. The majority are happy with their parishes and "their level of Mass attendance and involvement in parish ministries is much higher than the Catholic average" (*Journey*, p. 7). Among the suggestions offered by the initiates, a telling one is to have more "after-care" uniquely suited to them following completion of the process. So, on the one hand these newcomers to the faith continue to be involved at higher levels than their Catholic counterparts and, on the other, they feel that more could be done to support them in their new faith and place in the community.

What Parish and Diocesan Leaders Had to Say

This summary section in the Report is based upon eight carefully planned regional consultations with diocesan and parish leaders in the initiation process. A total of about 650 people took part. The findings were basically as follows:

- Pastoral leaders labor to integrate the newly initiated into their communities of faith
- During the Easter Season, many dioceses have a special gathering of the newly initiated and liturgy with the Bishop
- About one-half of parishes seem to "have a functioning mystagogy, whether for the Easter season or longer"

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- A few parishes' mystagogia extends a full year following completion of initiation
- A small number of parishes guide the newly initiated into Small Church Communities
- Some parishes invite their new members to help support those in the initiation process the following year.

(see *Journey*, p. 15)

What the Individual Bishops Had to Say

The large number of bishops' responses reflected great enthusiasm for the Rite—"The RCIA is a 'great source of renewal' for parishes and an inspiration for greater outreach and an evangelizing spirit" (*Journey*, p. 26). With regard to mystagogia, the Report notes that a number of bishops expressed concern for an effective mystagogia and for keeping new Catholics active in their faith communities.

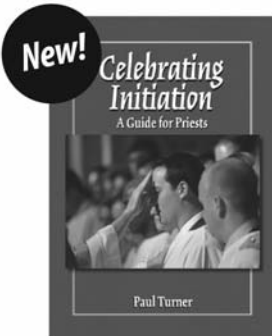
Responses from the Bishops' Committees

Each of the committees within the U.S. Bishops' Conference that collaborated on the national study offered a summary response at the end of the Report. These responses are in effect an attempt to focus on strengths and weaknesses in the implementation of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* as these emerge from the surveys and consultations of the several-year study. Close attention should be paid to these for what they say and do not say.

Committee on Education The (then) Bishops' Committee on Education thought that the Period of Mystagogia was perhaps the weakest part of the initiation process as implemented in the United States. They based this in particular upon the survey of the newly initiated in which the neophytes expressed the need for more aftercare following the completion of initiation. Further, the Committee links this with the ongoing question about the

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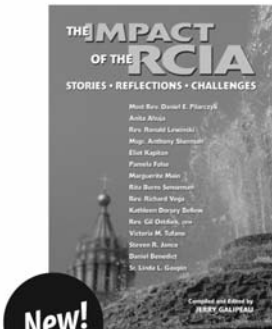
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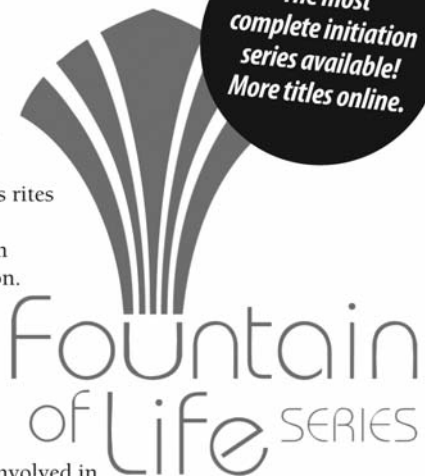


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commitment of Catholic parishes to ongoing, lifelong faith formation for all parishioners. This section concludes:

Involving newly received members in parish ministries and incorporating them into small faith communities are some of the ways that parishes reportedly are using to achieve this deepening and incorporation.

(Journey, p. 39)

Committee on the Liturgy The (then) Bishops'

Committee on the Liturgy noted that "some parishes have a couple of sessions with neophytes following the Easter Vigil and that other parishes report a mystagogy period of one to three months. The Liturgy Committee came to a similar conclusion as the Education Committee, that the Period of Mystagogy is the weakest area of implementation of the Rite.

What the Rite Has to Say

These insights from the Report need to be considered in light of what the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* has to say about the Period of Mystagogy. It is in fact the briefest section of the whole ritual book, amounting to about a page and a half.

The committee reports in *Journey* cite the key opening paragraphs of this section of the book, paragraph nos. US 244-245/CAN 234-235. Paragraph 244/234 explains that the mystagogy period is

a time for the community and the neophytes together to grow in deepening their grasp of the paschal mystery and in making it part of their

lives through meditation on the Gospel, sharing in the Eucharist, and doing the works of charity.

If their formation was done according to the Rite, the neophytes have long since learned how to meditate on the Good News and should have found their place in the community's charitable works. The only thing that is new now is full participation in the eucharistic mystery.

Paragraph 245/235 is a splendid description of the particular mystagogy that these newly minted Catholic Christians are experiencing and what it achieves. Through the Gospel message and "above all through their experience of the sacraments they have received," they enter a deeper and more effective grasp of the mysteries of the Triduum. And from this, "they derive a new perception of the faith, of the Church, and of the world." In other words, they have been sacramentally changed through the Triduum celebration and now see and hear and know in new and deeper Gospel ways the mystery of Christ in their lives.

"If we are looking for frequent pull-out or take-aside sessions for our newly baptized and received as part of mystagogy, as was done throughout the earlier process with them, then we are fighting the vision and provisions of the Rite. The focus is less on pull-out than immersion in. They are now fully with us at Sunday Eucharist and learning in the fabric of their lives the full paschal mystery of the Lord."

A key provision of the Rite for our purposes, however, is found in para. 247/237, which clarifies:

Since the distinctive spirit and power of the period of postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy derive from the new, personal experience of the sacraments and of the community, its main setting is the so-called Masses for neophytes, that is, the Sunday Masses of the Easter season.

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In other words, the Rite assumes that regular contact with the community has already been established and that in any number of informal settings during the Easter season the neophytes and community are already receiving what they need from each other in order to go deeper into the mysteries. And the neophytes are continuing to meditate on the Gospel and engage in the community's service ministries. No reference is made to a continuing taking apart of the neophytes in their own right for formation ("sessions"), as was done throughout their conversion-driven formation process leading to the Triduum. They are now immersed in the community and fed uniquely at their new and full experience of the community's Sunday eucharistic celebration. This is where mystagogy happens during Easter. And this is why the section on the Period of Mystagogy is the briefest in the ritual book!

Beyond this, the Rite mentions only

- a celebration around Pentecost to close the Period of Mystagogy
- a special gathering of the neophytes on the anniversary of their baptism
- a eucharistic celebration with the Bishop at least once in the year following baptism
(see RCIA #s US 249-251/CAN 239-241)

To these provisions of the universal Rite of the Church the U.S. Bishops added a fuller mystagogy beyond the Easter season, extending about a year, to the anniversary of baptism. During this time they mention "at least monthly assemblies of the neophytes for their deeper Christian formation and incorporation into the full life of the Christian community (U.S. National Statute # 24). Even this provision does not necessarily mean a "session" solely for the neophytes. The occasion could be some event within the parish that can include some time for formation and reflection. One thinks in particular of adult formation occasions where the neophytes can "find their voice" within the community and continue to share their own, unique, and fresh experience of the mystery of Jesus Christ in their lives and learn from others' experience. In this way the community and neophytes together continue the deepening called for in the Rite.

What Do You Have to Say

If we are looking for frequent pull-out or take-aside sessions for our newly baptized and received as part of mystagogy, as was done throughout the earlier process with them, then we are fighting the vision and provisions of the Rite. The focus is less on pull-out than immersion in. They are now fully with us at Sunday Eucharist and learning in the fabric of their lives the full paschal mystery of the Lord. Without this understanding, pastoral ministers bemoan "we cannot get them back!" Back for what? We need to ask instead where they are spending their time. If that is at Eucharist and as part of the life of the community and its ministries, then we have probably done our own ministry as an initiating community pretty well.

The real question perhaps is where within our community they can find the continuing and ongoing adult faith formation that is their need and right as full members of the assembly. If regular adult formation is not already a deep commitment of the community, then our newcomers have nowhere to go with the spiritual hungers we have helped them nurture and the skills at meditating on Gospel teaching we have helped them learn. This is clearly related to the "aftercare" that the newly initiated expressed a strong desire for in the U.S. study.

How does your parish evaluate its success with the Period of Mystagogy? How well do you think your community is doing? What are its strengths? Where does it need to grow in order to faithfully serve its newcomers and to continue to serve the community that supports those new to faith? The strengths and growth points of the initiation process are so often the strengths and growth points of our parish communities. New Catholic Christians are made in the image of Christ they find in this particular assembly of the Body of Christ. Their experience of Christ among us helps to tell us where we need to grow.

Let us know what you think:
jshellman@naforum.org.

Mystogogy at St. Luke the Evangelist Parish

By James Burkart



James Burkart

What did the experience of Holy Thursday mean for you? Answer: "Proof that the Spirit is acting in our community."

Following the celebration of Lent and the Sacred Triduum in 2009, our parish family was invited to gather for three weeks, along with the neophytes, to enter again into the experience that we had just celebrated during the Triduum. Of

course, we call this experience mystogogy. This is a challenge in most parishes, it certainly was in ours. Mystogogical catechesis and reflection asks the participants to "settle in," to "reflect," "to re-live" the mystery or mysteries that were celebrated. For so many, it seems, the art of reflection is lost because it requires time. For most these days, time is a very precious commodity.

In our parish of St. Luke the Evangelist in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, we took each of the three days, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday/Easter, separately. We spent the first several minutes of each evening re-connecting with the liturgy in question. We sang parts of relevant hymns, we remembered significant prayers and proclamations of the Word of God, and we recalled significant actions, for example, the washing of feet, the reception of Holy Communion, and continuing to spend time with the

Lord in prayer following the liturgy. We remembered our pilgrimage to the cross, our prayers and the silence, the washing away of sin, and the smell and the feel of holy chrism dripping down the faces of the newly baptized, etc.

This was a new experience for our parish. In addition, our challenge was not just that we had never offered such an experience, but that this kind of spiritual and catechetical experience is a difficult time commitment for so many who have children to feed and homework to finish and long hours at work to fit in. It was a challenge, it was new for us, but for those who were able to take part it was a wonderful opportunity to continue to enter into the mystery of the sacramental grace that is so lavishly shared with everyone when the Church celebrates the great Three Days.

"This was a new experience for our parish... It was a challenge, it was new for us, but for those who were able to take part it was a wonderful opportunity to continue to enter into the mystery of the sacramental grace that is so lavishly shared with everyone when the Church celebrates the great Three Days."

Each evening when we gathered, after refreshing and reminding ourselves what and how we celebrated that particular liturgy, we asked three questions: What did you experience? What did it mean? What has to change? We focused on listening and sharing rather than discussion. This allowed a more reflective atmosphere to settle over the participants. We began in our church with the choir for the first part of our reflection. Following the brief liturgical reminder, each of the above questions was asked with several minutes of reflection following, and then everyone had the opportunity to share their thoughts. We asked for brief phrases or one-word responses. These responses were noted and used for the second part of the evening. On

our first evening, as we reflected on Holy Thursday, we asked, “What did it mean?” We heard responses like; more prayer, stay connected, serve others, less of me and more of Jesus, constant peeling away of the person—like an onion, getting closer and closer to the core truth.

Part two of our evening found us moving from our church to our parish hall. This enabled a short break, a few refreshments, and a mood change. When we regrouped we formed small discussion groups. Using the responses from part one, we highlighted major themes of the particular liturgy and asked, for Holy Thursday, “What does the image of discipleship suggest to you now?” For Good Friday, we asked, “How does your experience of the cross from Good Friday translate into your daily lives?” For Holy Saturday we asked, “What now?” It was a beautiful experience for all who participated. At the end of each session we wrote prayers summarizing our evening.

One such prayer stated, “Lord, give us the opportunity to reach out and share with others; to be invitational in sharing the faith.” Other examples were:

God loves us

Obedience is required

We are shamed when we deny Jesus

How can you say no to others when Christ has done this for us?

Charity

Come into the light of the cross

Sacrifice for others as Christ did for us

James Burkart is pastor of the Catholic Community of St. Luke the Evangelist in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston (Texas).

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Elements in Building a Renewed and Evangelizing Parish

By Tom Quinlan



Tom Quinlan

A few years ago, I was asked to speak with a group of catechetical leaders in the neighboring Archdiocese of Chicago about the state of faith formation. Since my time in ministry in the 1990's at a parish in the shadow of Willow Creek Community Church (the mother of all mega-churches), I have had the strong conviction that catechetical ministry needs to be done with an *evangelizing* focus.

Indeed, in the post-modern world we live in, it would be wise to see all parish ministry through the lens of evangelization, that core mission of the Church as framed by Pope Paul VI in *Evangelization in the Modern World*.

As one might expect, my faith formation talk morphed into a full-blown consideration of how to tackle the daunting, yet thrilling, prospect of forming parishes that are evangelized and evangelizing. The following is one element of this presentation as it has evolved today. It is a distillation of key areas for parishes to explore as they seek effectively to embody and proclaim the Good News of Jesus in our world today. Perhaps this "list" (which is not in any particular order) may help to spark imaginative and lively conversation among parish leadership. I hope it will invite readers to reflect upon their ministerial experience and wisdom to create their own primary areas of focus for parish renewal.

1. Great Liturgy

- Not just what we do, but who we *are* as Body of Christ!

2. Effective Welcoming/Intentional Orientation Process into Parish

- Lots of possibilities: e.g., welcome dinner..., meet staff and parishioners; create system of mentor relationships..., person-to-person, family-to-family.

3. Staff and Parish Leadership Find Common Vision and Mission

- Synergistic collaboration—GOOD! Turfism—BAD!

4. Foster Small Community Dynamics

- Be intentional in design to minimize the chance of "enclaves" forming.
- Small communities must always be understood as existing within the larger parish context.
- Be supportive of those that develop spontaneously.

5. Develop Meaningful (experience-laden) Adult Ministry (Pastoral, Social Justice, Spirituality...)

- Adult ministry should be developed with an eye toward starting with experience and designing mystagogical catechesis out of the experience. (The same can be said for child and youth catechesis.)

6. Create an "Investment" Culture within the Parish

- Make it a community where it is expected, natural, and life-giving to share one's talent and time.

7. Orient Everything toward and in Relation to Liturgical Year and Sunday Mass

- Liturgically based (including the Lectionary), liturgical prayer for all meetings, all faith formation sessions, all sporting events, etc. Construct parish calendar and schedule in accord with and not in competition with weekend Masses.

8. Place Tremendous Emphasis on Parent Faith Formation

- Pull out all the stops, especially for Baptism and then Eucharist!
- Make Eucharist and eucharistic lifestyle a focal point for all sacramental formation, for all ages.
- Speak to parents "where they live." Help them make connections between life and faith.
- Surface, form, and empower peer mentors among parents.

9. Do A Better Job of Integrating Adult Initiation (RCIA) into the Parish Community

- Throughout the process! We can do more than just trot them out for dismissals and milestone rites.
- This would enrich parishioners and newcomers to the faith alike.
- Beyond the Period of Mystagogy, continue to mentor and integrate those initiated (they are hungry for and need continuing nurture and adult formation, as do all our parishioners!).

10. Look at *Everything* as Relational/Evangelizing Opportunities

- Every phone call, every late registration, every bereavement process, every marriage process, all scouting, sports, social service events..., and everything relating to the parish school.

11. Utilize Effective Marketing Principles

- Get away from calling anything related to adult faith formation a “class.”
- Create multiple exposures via multiple means.
- Don’t forget to use personal invitation—often the most effective.
- Using the bulletin alone is akin to preaching to the choir.

12. Allocate Parish Resources More Effectively, More Justly

- Requires vision, creativity, and courage.
- The resulting change in ministry alignment and financial support may need to be radical.

13. Don’t Shy from the Gospel’s Challenging, Prophetic Message

- Create service and outreach opportunities for all ages, with a focus that reaches beyond the parish.

14. Take Advantage of Technology to Help Build Community

- Websites and email are incredibly powerful and helpful, and yet just a part of the possibilities.
- Don’t dismiss technology when working to strengthen the relational dynamics in a parish!

15. Give Particular Attention to Ministries for the “Wounded”

- Our greatest opportunity to evangelize comes when life has left us vulnerable or grieving.
- People will never forget how well (or not) the parish was there for them in times of bereavement, illness, divorce, reconciliation, etc.

16. Understand Your People and the Culture They Live In

- Listen to them, love them. Build ministry according to their needs with, of course, Catholic faith in Jesus Christ always underpinning and giving focus to it all.

Tom Quinlan is director of the Religious Education Office in the Diocese of Joliet. He is a member of the governance board of the (U.S.) National Conference for Catechetical Leadership (NCCL). This article is reprinted with his permission. He may be contacted at tquinlan@dioceseofjoliet.org.

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RESOURCE REVIEW

Patterned by Grace: How Liturgy Shapes Us

By Daniel T. Benedict, Jr.

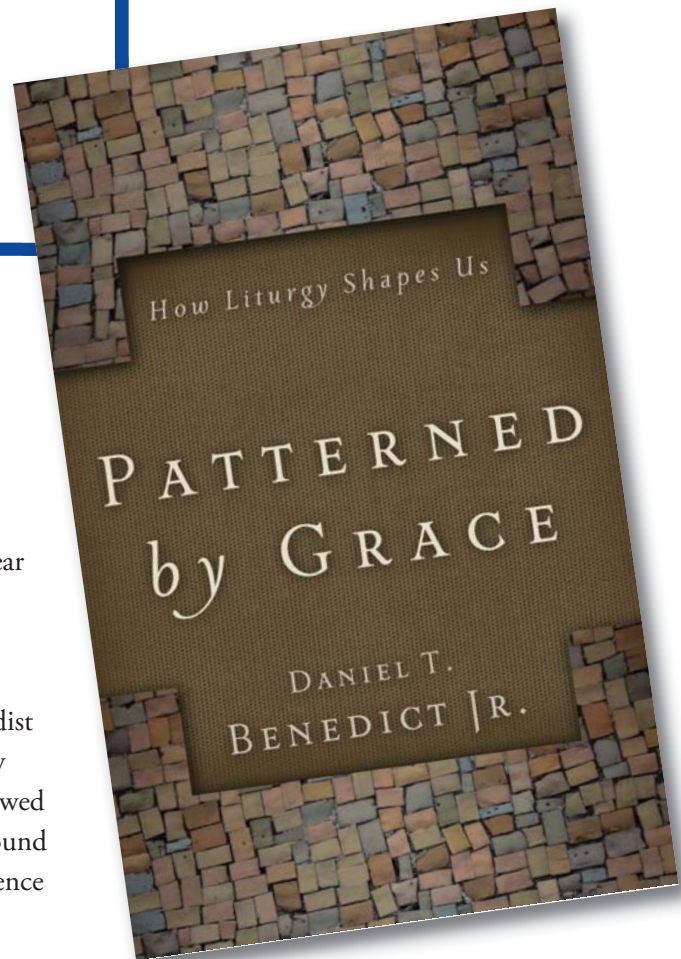
Published by Upper Room Books, Paper,
\$14.00 (U.S.), 160 pgs.

Reviewed by Nancy Dunkerly

Once at a family reunion I overheard a comment that Granddaddy would be really proud that his values are still alive in the young adult generation and visible in all they had accomplished. After reading this book, I felt that must be what some of our ancestral leaders of the liturgical movement would feel—really proud at how their work continues to bear fruit among a diverse group of dedicated people.

In *Patterned by Grace*, Daniel T. Benedict Jr., a retired pastor and former director of worship of the General Board of Discipleship of the United Methodist Church, carries the work of liturgical renewal to new congregations and leaders in a way that inspires renewed trust in the gifts of good liturgy for a lived faith. I found this book energizing. It reassured me that the experience of worship is grace-filled and the work of liturgical reform is not forgotten in our day.

Although written originally for Protestant readers, there is much here for Catholics. Benedict explains liturgy as patterned communal action in the worship of God, as scheduled ritual actions supported by words. “Liturgy has to do with symbols and signs deeply and truthfully lived....” Liturgy is formative, an experience in which the Spirit of God “disorients and reorients us, exhorting, cajoling, evoking, and provoking us into Love’s service.” In a compelling style, Benedict reminds us that God’s work in us is continually, patiently, relentlessly waiting for us to be ready to receive grace as “The liturgy waits



for us.” The Spirit of God is always at work in the liturgy, waiting for us to wake up and respond.

Like many of the good books about liturgy, the case is well made for the kind of catechesis that is inherent in the action of liturgy itself. If liturgy is going to have a chance to wield its influence on our lives and relationships with God and others, there is need of catechesis *for* and *from* liturgy and a need for resources that offer practical guidance for fashioning this catechesis. One of the

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great gifts of this book is that it does just that. There are thoughtful original prayers and reflection questions included at the end of each chapter as well as a group study and exploration guide at the end of the book.

After his introduction, the author unpacks the ways liturgy shapes us in five chapters and a postscript. The first chapter outlines some formative dimensions of the liturgy, ways the actions and very patterns of our worship have power to shape disciples. He continues to unpack these ideas in the rest of the book. He explores how Christians keep time through the rhythms of the Church's daily prayer and cycles of the liturgical year (chapters 2 and 3). Chapter 4 includes a mystical reflection on baptism and a fine section on the formative dimensions of our communal experience of this sacrament.

Chapter 5, on eucharistic living, provides reflection on the fourfold action of taking, blessing, breaking, and giving. The image of Eucharist as spending time in "sorrow's kitchen" suggests that a truly grateful celebration of the Eucharist finds a way to include and declare truthfully that life hurts. Passage from death to life, from sin to love, from living in the dark to living in the light is painful. Another image shakes any complacency—Eucharist as an undomesticated power

possibly waiting for us in this sacrament, like a tiger waiting for us to enter the jungle of our own truth and God's mystery. The story of one parish's response to being captured by Christ the tiger and how they were taken, blessed, and broken open to be given to the world is enough to make reading this book worthwhile.

All in all, this book should be remedy for any traces of Catholic self-important thoughts that "we have the liturgy" over our Protestant brothers and sisters. The gifts of God waiting in liturgy, wanting to dance and move with us, waiting to shape us, are for the many. The pioneers of liturgical reform in our day would be proud of this work.

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Nancy Dunkerly is co-founder of Spiritual Ministries Institute, a non-profit organization promoting ecumenical Christian formation for spiritual directors and other spiritual growth ministries. She coordinates a network of spiritual directors in the Texas-Arkansas region. A Forum Team member and popular retreat leader and speaker, Nancy has many years of experience with catechumenal ministry at parish and diocesan levels.

RESOURCE REVIEW

Celebrating Initiation: A Guide for Priests

By Paul Turner

Published by World Library

Publications, Paper,

\$24.95 (U.S.)

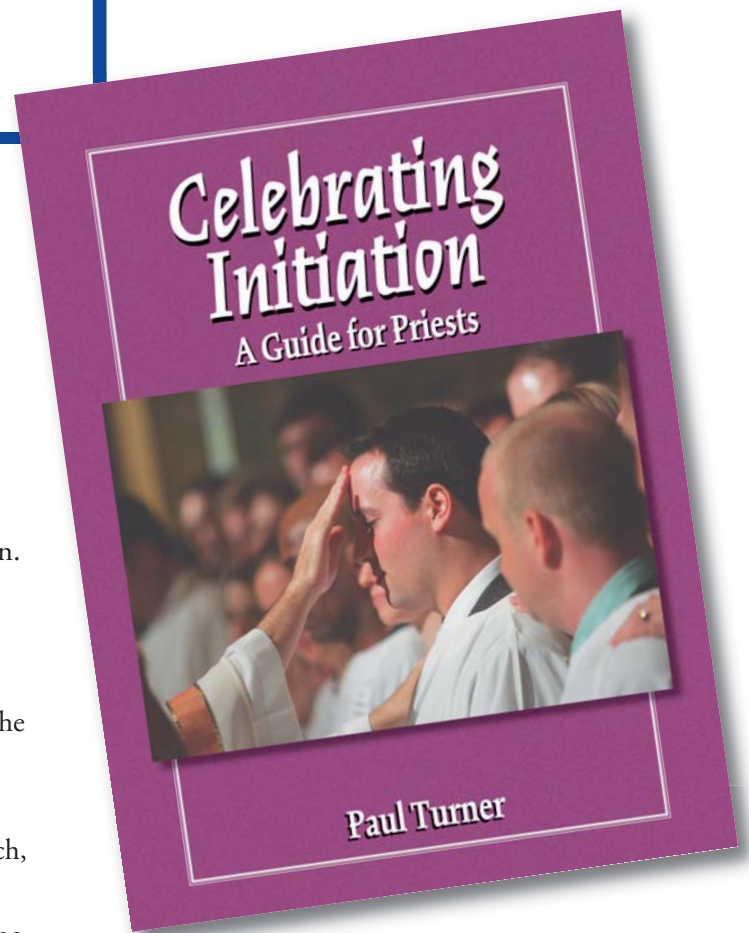
Reviewed by Michael Clay

Paul Turner, priest, seasoned pastor, scholar, and teacher, has written a most helpful book for anyone who presides over the vast range of rituals that comprise the sacraments of initiation. While *Celebrating Initiation: A Guide for Priests* focuses primarily on how to celebrate the rites found in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, there are also chapters dealing with infant baptism at Mass, Confirmation, and the First Communion of children.

The author shows us the deftness that comes from being a seasoned pastor and a liturgical scholar in the way he weaves history, theology, and pastoral praxis seamlessly into each chapter. He covers all phases of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, including adaptations for rites with children of catechetical age, those coming into full communion with the Catholic Church, and those Catholics baptized in infancy who seek to complete the process of initiation. He goes through the rite step-by-step and leads the reader clearly through all aspects of the ritual.

Turner shows important pastoral sensitivity to the status of the baptized, something that in my experience we still struggle to appreciate and affirm in the pastoral implementation of the Rite (e.g., everyone doesn't need the same process and rituals because some are baptized and some are not, some catechized, others not). He clearly makes the case for respecting baptismal dignity by

encouraging awareness of the optional nature of many of the rites for the baptized (e.g., the United States "Rite of Sending the Candidates for Recognition by the Bishop" (RCIA [U.S.] 438-445)) and the importance of ritually distinguishing the baptized from the unbaptized. He argues convincingly for a general resistance to combined rites for the unbaptized and baptized, although there



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may be situations where a combined rite is the only realistic option (e.g., in a small parish with only one Mass scheduled each weekend).

Likewise, Paul Turner shows appropriate ecumenical sensitivity in his description of those who come with formation and life in another Christian denomination and to what extent they should or should not celebrate the rites adapted for the baptized, e.g., those who may and may not celebrate the Presentations (see *Celebrating Initiation*, p. 85).

Those whose inclination may be toward a more rubrically and textually bound approach to the Rite may find some of Turner's suggestions for adaptation curious and more adventuresome than they are comfortable with, especially those who are newer to the celebration of the rites.

Nevertheless, his textual suggestions seem clearly within the boundaries of the Rite, which states fairly clearly where options are possible.

Those who are looking to breathe new life into the way they celebrate the rites will find Turner's ritual adaptations thought-provoking. Many of his ritual adaptations are commendable although there are a few that might not bear up under the scrutiny of some (e.g., the inclusion of the laity in the laying on of hands in the Rite of Scrutiny (*Celebrating*, p.70) and the placing of

the laity in the sanctuary to join the priest in presenting the Creed to the elect (p. 87).

His explanation of the optional presentation of a cross during the Rite of Acceptance (see RCIA #s 59 and 74) was enlightening, but I am not sure I would agree with

his firm resistance to the presentation of a cross during the rite. I am told by some catechumens, especially younger people, that the cross that was presented to them during the Rite of Acceptance became a reminder of the crosses placed all over their bodies during the rite. In an age where tattoos and other visible markings and attire are increasingly used by the young as a form of identity, perhaps the presentation of a cross during an initiation rite makes some sense.

Those who take the sacraments and rites of Christian initiation as seriously as they take the *Order of Mass* or the *Order of Christian Funerals* will find this resource invaluable in their attempts to show the power of liturgy in the life of Catholics and those who desire to join us.

Msgr. Michael Clay is pastor of St. Ann Catholic Church in Clayton, NC, a team member of the North American Forum on the Catechumenate and a former faculty member of Theological College, the national seminary of The Catholic University of America.

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RESOURCE REVIEW

Guide for Sponsors

By Ronald Lewinski

Published by Liturgy Training Publications, Paper,
\$6.00, 67 pgs.

Reviewed by Kathy Meus

Too often the role of a sponsor in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* is not fully understood by those who accept this great privilege. This easy-to-read *Guide for Sponsors* is a must for one who is discerning the role of sponsor or is a sponsor. It is outstanding! Each chapter has a focus on a particular point concerning the role of the sponsor. The natural flow from chapter to chapter gives a personal aspect to this role as well as an informative one.

In his *Guide*, author Ron Lewinski reminds sponsors that they represent the community and are looked upon as the direct link between the individual and the community—initiation takes the whole community. This book contains many points that are valuable for the catechumenal team as well as the sponsor. The sponsor is not a catechist, but rather a mentor, a guide. The role of the catechist is assumed within the catechumenal team. It would be beneficial for catechumenal teams to read this book for insights and practical points concerning the role of sponsor.

Becoming an effective sponsor does not happen all at once. Ron unfolds several helpful traits for the sponsor's awareness. For example, it is important to remember that silence is good and being respectful of what is being

shared is necessary. The reader is also reminded about listening to the stories of others and how essential this is in the precatechumenate and throughout the entire process of initiation.

A variety of excellent questions a sponsor might ask are also addressed. When someone is asked to be a



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sponsor, usually the first thought expressed is that he or she does not feel qualified. Ron states again that the sponsor is not a catechist and, as a faith-filled Catholic Christian, does not need to have all the answers. The catechumenal team and pastoral staff are available for assistance. Other common concerns addressed include why a lectionary is used, why a dismissal from liturgy is helpful, and what if the catechumen or candidate is shy and doesn't share in group discussions.

I found the suggestions for personal reflection and prayer by the sponsor to be an extra bonus. In this way the role of the sponsor as a form of ministry is developed. Ron provides for each period of the initiation process, with thought-provoking questions that are right on target for one to grasp the uniqueness of each of the periods. The personal reflections would also be beneficial for the catechumenal team.

A concise and helpful glossary is provided that defines the terms that are related to and used in the initiation process.

“Guide for Sponsors is a must for every sponsor and member of the catechumenal team. It is also a great resource for members of the parish community. Having copies of this guide available is a way to encourage members of the parish, when asked, to become a sponsor.”

Guide for Sponsors is a must for every sponsor and member of the catechumenal team. It is also a great resource for members of the parish community. Having copies of this guide available is a way to encourage members of the parish, when asked, to become a sponsor. The role of the sponsor is ministry and it is the role of parish leaders to provide essential resources to aid one in this ministry. This guide is one of those essential resources that will enable all who read it to have a deeper appreciation and understanding of the role of a sponsor in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*.

Kathy Meus is the director of faith formation at St. Augustine's Church in Baldwinsville, NY. She has been involved in initiation ministry for 25 years with a focus the past ten years on the initiation of children. A member of the Forum Team, Kathy is also a member of the Syracuse Diocese's RCIA Committee. In 2007 she received the Bishop Frank Harrison Award from the Diocese for outstanding dedication to catechetical ministry.

The North American Forum on the Catechumenate's Pastoral Training Institutes provide ministers—volunteer and paid, full and part-time, lay and clergy - with deeper understanding of the vision of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* and the fundamental and advanced skills to implement all aspects of the Rite and its implications for reconciliation. Institute leaders are among North America's most experienced pastoral ministers, liturgists, catechists, and theologians.

2010 CALENDAR

■ THE INITIATION EXPERIENCE INSTITUTES

present the compelling vision and pastoral skills to implement the initiation process and emphasize the relationship of good liturgy to good catechesis.

BEGINNINGS & BEYOND INSTITUTE

BEGINNINGS "PLUS" INSTITUTE

January 28-31, 2010, Diocese of Syracuse (NY)—with focus on adults and children

June 23-26, 2010, Diocese of Camden (NJ)—Bilingual

June 24-27, 2010, Archdiocese of Montreal (Quebec)—with focus on adults and children

June 29-July 2, 2010, Diocese of Amarillo (TX)—with focus on adults and children

August 12-15, 2010, Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston (WV)—with focus on adults and children

August 19-22, 2010, Diocese of Victoria (TX)—with focus on adults and children

BEGINNINGS INSTITUTE

April 29-May 1, 2010, Diocese of Boise (ID)—with 2 afternoon dialogues in Spanish

July 23-25, 2010, Diocese of Arlington (VA)—Spanish

August 13-15, 2010, Diocese of San Diego (CA)—Spanish

November 4-6, 2010, Archd. of St. Paul & Minneapolis (MN)

■ INITIATION IN RURAL AND SMALL PARISHES (Diocesan Events)

■ THE FOCUS ON INITIATION INSTITUTES

concentrate on specific aspects of initiation using presentations, celebrations of the rites, and small group discussions. It is preferable that they follow the Initiation Experience Institutes.

CATECHUMENATE

August 6-7, 2010, Diocese of Stockton (CA)

August 20-21, 2010, Archdiocese of Los Angeles (CA)

August 27-28, 2010, Diocese of Portland (ME)

PURIFICATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT

August 19-20, 2010, Diocese of Gaylord (MI)

MYSTAGOGY

CHILDREN AND CHRISTIAN INITIATION

July 30-31, 2010, Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston (TX)

August 6-7, 2010, Diocese of Des Moines (IA)

August 13-14, 2010, Dioceses of San Jose and Monterey (CA)

August 27-28, 2010, Blessed Sacrament Parish (Diocese of Rockford IL)

November 5-6, 2010, Archdiocese of Cincinnati (OH)

CONCERNING THE BAPTIZED

April 30-May 1, 2010, Diocese of Erie (PA)

May 7-8, 2010, Archdiocese of Ottawa (Ontario)

May 14-15, 2010, Archdiocese of Baltimore (MD)

June 11-12, 2010, Diocese of Little Rock (AR)

June 18-19, 2010, Diocese of Lafayette (IN)

July 9-10, 2010, Archdiocese of Dubuque (IA)

July 16-17, 2010, Diocese of Knoxville (TN)

July 23-24, 2010, Archdiocese of Oklahoma City (OK)

August 6-7, 2010, Diocese of New Ulm (MN)

August 27-28, 2010, Diocese of Las Vegas (NV)

■ THE INITIATING COMMUNITY INSTITUTES

explore advanced issues of implementation for experienced ministers as they broaden the initiation experience to include the entire community. Small groups discuss, share, and critique models.

DEVELOPING THE MINISTRIES

FURTHERING THE INITIATION EXPERIENCE

PRAYING THE RITES

October 7-9, 2010, Diocese of Lafayette (LA)

ECHOING GOD'S WORD

June 25-26, 2010, Diocese of Shreveport (LA)

IMAGING THE INITIATION PROCESS IN SMALL CHURCH COMMUNITIES

■ AMBASSADORS OF CHRIST: BUILDING RECONCILING COMMUNITIES

explores the ministry of reconciliation invites participants to reflect on the vision and process of conversion and reconciliation explores an understanding of a reconciling community rooted in initiation examines present processes and future possibilities for reconciling ministry in the parish.

May 20-22, 2010, Archdiocese of Louisville (KY)

■ THE VISION OF INITIATION MINISTRY CONFERENCES (Diocesan Events)

introduce the vision and practice of initiation in a two-day format for individual dioceses, formation institutions, and religious communities. For clergy and other pastoral ministers, together or in separate conferences.

January 13-14, 2010 (Clergy) and

January 16-17, 2010 (Pastoral Ministers), Diocese of San Bernardino (CA)

February 12-13, 2010, Vision of Initiation Ministry Conference for Pastoral Ministers, University of Notre Dame (IN)

■ THE EVANGELIZING PARISH: VISION, PASSION, PRACTICE

develops the vision and practice of evangelization and how this creates parishes of mission

May 28-29, 2010, Western Conference for the Catechumenate, Saskatoon (Saskatchewan)

June 15-16, 2010 (Clergy), Diocese of Nelson (Brit. Columbia)

■ TO BE DETERMINED

Diocese of Manchester (NH)

Archdiocese of Omaha (NE)

Washington Theological Union (Washington DC)

June 11-12, 2010



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