

To Hold In Trust...Futuring

Ron Oakham, O.Carm., Chair of Forum's Board of Directors



Ron Oakham

You may have heard this favorite phrase of one of my Carmelite brothers: "when you're up to your 'waist' in alligators, it's hard to remember you came to drain the swamp." (I admit I have cleaned it up a bit.) I find this is

true in so many situations. We become so caught up in the details of the work that needs to be done right now that we often lose sight of the goal to which this work is supposedly leading us. To overcome this, most organizations have a Board of Directors.

One of the prime responsibilities a Board has is to keep the goal clearly in view as Forum goes about its regular work. In this way the Board not only looks to see that the work being done is appropriate to helping the organization reach its goal, but it also works to refine and clarify the organization's goal in light of unfolding realities. Thus, as a regular

part of Forum's Board of Directors' meetings, a portion of our spring meeting is always set aside for what is called "Informed Dreaming."

This part of our agenda is set by considering what lies ahead as we continue to strive for full implementation in all parishes of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* and its implications for reconciliation. We choose a topic, then choose a way for us to become informed about it (a presenter joining the group, a book to be read, etc.). After wrestling with the issue, we then spend time considering how this impinges on Forum's work? What items of what we have learned need to be woven into the

"Today we live in a time in which the diversity of culture is seen as a gift rather than as an obstacle. It is something to be revered and incorporated into the lifeblood of a community that is made up of members from different cultural communities. But being a multi-cultural community is a new reality for most of us. Thus, it presents us with uncharted challenges."

fabric of our current and ongoing work? What changes in our future do we need to begin to put in place (refining what we are doing, setting up new initiatives, etc.) so as to meet the identified challenge?

Two issues have been very prominent in the past few years: first, the task of cultural awareness and the work of enculturation in the catechumenate process; second, the challenge of adapting the Rite for children.

continued next page

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.

Table of Contents

To Hold in Trust
By Ron Oakham page 1

Tough Joy
By Jim Schellman page 4

On-line Institute Registration page 5

One Participant's Experience of the 2003 Toronto Beginnings and Beyond page 6

A View of the 2003 Oakland Institute on Imaging the Initiation Process in Small Church Communities page 6

25 Years Ago: Remembering the Senanque Symposium
By Tom Ivory page 7

La Liturgia Catequiza
By Rosanne Belpedio, CSJ page 10

Resource Reviews page 11

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults: A Pastoral Liturgical Commentary (Revised Edition)

Agenda for the Small Church: A Handbook for Rural Ministry

Calendar page 14



Over the past several years, the Board has been working with the challenge of fostering a unity within diversity (which is different than forging uniformity—a pre-Vatican II effort of our Church). We live in a time in which the diversity of culture is seen as a gift rather than as an obstacle. It is something to be revered and incorporated into the lifeblood of a community that is made up of members from different cultural communities. But being a multi-cultural community is a new reality for most of us. Thus, it presents us with uncharted challenges. In taking on this challenge, Forum set up a task force to explore the issues and to make recommendations on how we as a body can constructively work with the challenge. To help us wrestle with the issues, resources and workshops for institute team members have been offered, and the last Convocation of members was devoted to the challenge.

Fostering a union that incorporates cultural differences instead of rejecting the differences so as to achieve a uniformity (which, in truth, is determined by the dominant culture) is not an easy matter. It will require our continued efforts during this period of gestation of a new reality. Our Board, then, continues to look for information about this challenge so that it may influence its dreaming. This past spring, for our “Informed Dreaming” we reviewed in video form the presentation given at Forum’s 2002

Convocation by Team member Tim Piasecki entitled *Initiation in Multi-cultural Parishes*. Before engaging in our conversation we also read a book by Eric Law, *Inclusion: Making Room For Grace* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2000). And now this conversation is gestating within us.

continued

The North American Forum on the Catechumenate

3033 Fourth Street, NE Washington, DC 20017-1102

(202) 529-9493 fax (202) 529-9497 www.naforum.org info@naforum.org

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.

Founder

† Rev. James B. Dunning
(1937-1995)

Board of Directors

Mr. Nelson Bonet
Miami, Florida
Ms. Clare Colella
San Bernardino, California
Ms. Brenda Easley Webb
Buffalo, New York

Ms. Rita Ferrone

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Sr. Sheila Finnerty, GSIC

Ottawa, Ontario

Rev. Ron Oakham, O. Carm.

Houston, Texas

Sr. Georgette Zalewska, RSM

Detroit, Michigan

Staff

Mr. James M. Schellman

Executive Director, ext. 28

Sr. Sheila O’Dea, RSM

Associate Director, ext. 24

Ms. Aleli Belonia

Institute Manager, ext. 25

Ms. Elizabeth Breslin

Administrative Support, ext. 21

Ms. Raven Bradley

Administrative Support, ext. 19

The FORUM Newsletter is published three times a year by The North American Forum on the Catechumenate and is available, free of charge, to all interested persons or institutions. Please address all correspondence to the address listed above.

Permission is granted to all subscribers of the FORUM Newsletter to reprint any articles or news items in the newsletter (permission not granted for graphics and copyrighted text). Include the following notation with the reprint:

"Reprinted from the FORUM Newsletter, (Date). No further reproduction permitted without permission.

For more information contact The North American Forum on the Catechumenate, 3033 Fourth Street NE, Washington D.C. 20017- Send a copy of the reprint to Forum for our records.

Copyright © 2003, The North American Forum on the Catechumenate.

The second issue that the Board has been considering is the adaptation of the Rite for children. In the early years of implementation, the focus was on adults. However, as parish teams worked with the Rite, there was a growing recognition that the ritual text presumed children of catechetical age would be included in this sacramental process. Christiane Brusselmans (the “mother” of Forum, having been the person who inspired and brought into being what is now known as the “Beginnings and Beyond Institute”) along with several other initiation ministers took up the concern and began addressing it through the Institute on the Christian Initiation of Children (ICIC). Unfortunately Christiane’s untimely death had a detrimental effect on this group’s efforts, and slowly the institute faded away.

Recognizing the importance of working with this dimension of the Rite, Forum established a task force on children in the catechumenate to explore the issue and to make recommendations for Forum’s work. An initial proposal was that Forum needs to take on the adaptation of the Rite for children as a constituent element of its mission of full implementation. The Board agreed to the recommendation, and subsequent work has been proceeding, if only gradually, to integrate this dimension more fully into our ongoing institute work.

The Board recognized that, especially when addressing the initiation of children, one enters into the realm of family systems. In order to be truly effective in the initiation of children, one must be inclusive of the family. Thus, at one spring meeting our “Informed Dreaming” was spent considering family systems. This was not directed specifically to initiation issues, but was to help us understand better the dynamics of family systems. Marianne Paulukonis, director of Family Life Ministry for the Diocese of Scranton, spent half a day with the Board sharing with us various points of information and guiding us through some interactive work with these points in relation to our own families. Our time together focused the lens through which we will look at the other recommendations from the task force on children in the catechumenate.

“...the basics of implementation are still new territory to many parishes. Even in parishes where the Rite has been in place for many years, new ministers are joining the efforts. Thus there is need for initial implementation work.... But as ministers in parishes unfold the vision of the Rite within the realities of their parish communities, new dimensions of the initiation process become clearer. Implementation continues to unfold the complexities of our multi-cultural, intergenerational communities.”



Forum Board

Standing l-r: Brenda Easley Webb, Georgette Zalewska, RSM, Ron Oakham, O.Carm., Sheila Finnerty, GSIC
Seated l-r: Jim Schellman, Nelson Bonet, Clare Colella, Rita Ferrone

We have been busy about the work of implementing the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* for over 20 years. One would think that the task should be reaching its conclusion. However, the basics of implementation are still new territory to many parishes. Even in parishes where the Rite has been in place for many years, new ministers are joining the efforts. Thus there is need for initial implementation work. Just keeping up with this need can “max out” Forum’s time. But as ministers in parishes unfold the vision of the Rite within the realities of their parish communities, new dimensions of the initiation process become clearer. Implementation continues to unfold the complexities of our multi-cultural, intergenerational communities. This means the task of full implementation continues to expand.

For Forum this is where “being up to our ‘waist’ in alligators” can cause us to forget “we came to drain the swamp.” Yes, we need to continue our efforts at initial implementation (helping new teams, training new ministers, etc.), but we must remember that our goal is full implementation in all parishes of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* and its implications for reconciliation. We must address the unfolding issues.

To this end, Forum’s Board of Directors seeks to look ahead to see the challenges that are arising so as to develop an appropriate response through which Forum can help parish teams in their ministerial efforts of implementation.

Tough Joy

Jim Schellman, Executive Director



Jim Schellman

The remarkable words of Pope Paul VI at the end of his Apostolic Exhortation *On Evangelization in the Modern World* have been much on my mind lately:

“Let us therefore preserve our fervor of spirit. Let us preserve the delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing, even when it is in tears that we must sow. May it mean for us...an interior

enthusiasm that nobody and nothing can quench.

May it be the great joy of our consecrated lives. And may the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the Good News not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervor, who have first received the joy of Christ, and who are willing to risk their lives so that the Kingdom may be proclaimed and the Church established in the midst of the world.”

(Evangelii Nuntiandi, para.80)

These words along with the Gospel itself help sustain in me the vision of what the Church and each of its members are for. Joy, fervor, comfort, risk, kingdom, above all, Christ—these are the essential and life-giving elements of the evangelizing mission of the Church. We are a community of faith always on pilgrimage and deeply in love with the One on whose behalf we face all moments and the obstacles they may present. And in the glow of this vision we are able to see all such moments as opportunities for evangelization, for the transformation of the world and its people into what God intended them to be from all time.

“But what is so redeeming to observe in Forum’s membership at this moment is a real determination coupled with that mysterious joy that is of a piece with Forum’s unique share in the ministry of evangelization. It is this kind of joy that wins hearts, transforms suffering, encourages generosity, creates opportunities for bringing the best out of people in circumstances that so easily dishearten.”

All of this is especially important to recall right now. Most anyone who has expended any time and talent in U.S. parish or diocesan ministry in the past year or so knows that the Church in the United States is in a very difficult time. The evidence seems to be that the economy, the war in Iraq and its aftermath, and the sexual abuse crisis in the Church are all having their effects. Giving is down. Income from personal and Church investments is showing the effects of great economic uncertainty. The Canadian Catholic community does not seem to be suffering to the same degree at this time.

These are only the most obvious factors affecting the Church in the United States just now. The results have been dramatic for Church ministry. Hardly a day passes where a number of national ministry associations do not receive word of the elimination of a parish ministry or the closing of a diocesan ministry support office. Many national Church ministry groups are also struggling to make ends meet. Income is dramatically less than a couple of years ago and reserve funds (where they exist) no less so. Together, national groups, dioceses, parishes, and many local charitable groups are struggling to balance the expenses of their services with revenue that simply is no match.

Even as Forum shares this experience, it only increases our commitment to the mission. And never has Forum’s mission been more important: the full implementation in all parishes of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* and its implications for reconciliation! This is what the struggle to make ends meet is for. It is requiring sacrifice on the part of Forum’s members and leaders. Belts have been tightened and will be tightened even more in the coming year. But what I really want to hold up here is the spirit in which Forum is facing this moment in service of its mission at the beginning of its third decade of service to the Church of North America and beyond.

continued on page 6

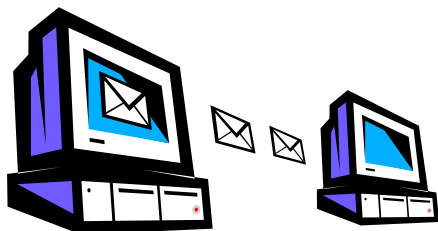
Forum's Website is Growing!

RECEIVE NOTICE WHEN FORUM NEWSLETTER IS POSTED

The Forum Newsletter appears on-line 3 times a year-
Spring, Fall and Winter.

Send us your email address so we can notify you when
an issue is posted.

Phone 202-529-9493 ext. 21 or email elizabeth@naforum.org



Institute Registration

ON-LINE REGISTRATION COMING SOON ON FORUM'S WEBSITE

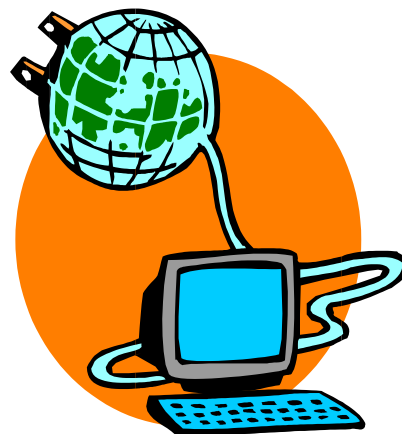
Beginning early in 2004 you will be able to register for
Forum Institutes on-line.

Check the website periodically for details.

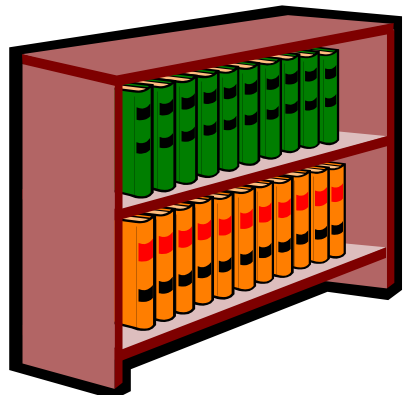
In the meantime, all Institute Registration Brochures
are being made available on-line
under the Calendar section of the Web Site.

Just click on the name of the co-sponsoring Diocese
to view the pdf brochure!

You can download a copy, fill it out, and return it to the Forum office.
If you have trouble viewing or printing the brochure, simply contact the
Forum office to receive a copy by return mail.



New Forum Book Service



All of Forum's resources are now listed on-line.
Simply click on the Book Service button to browse
and order on-line.

Be sure to check back periodically for notices of new resources!

Questions? Phone 202-529-9493 ext. 19 or
email bookservice@naforum.org

One Participant's Experience of the 2003 Toronto Beginnings and Beyond

"In many ways the Institute was like a mini-retreat. Even in the busy schedule the time allowed for reflection and sharing brought many spiritual gifts. One of these gifts was 'a change of heart.' Coming into the event with a rather negative view about the Forum's vision or approach to running an RCIA process, I am happy or delighted to say 'I am now beginning to see the light' (even if this clarity did not come until Thursday). The idea of moving...from a catechetical program to a community-based process makes an awful lot of sense. In this instance the whole community benefits, not just the individual asking to join the community. Now I understand why all of you are so dedicated to the vision of the process.... I am delighted to have met so many dedicated people who share their passion for Christ in such wonderful and sometimes surprising ways. ...For now we will, with the grace of God, pick up the challenge to bring this vision to reality in our communities. We know that this is not going to happen overnight."

Bert Monster

A View of the 2003 Oakland Institute on Imaging the Initiation Process in Small Church Communities

"Each parish and community is the home for developing of faith, therefore the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* and small Christian communities walk together side by side. It is like a pair of chopstick or a pair of feet. It becomes useless if one piece of chopstick is missing and with one foot we are limped. The mission becomes everyone's mission. Each baptized member is the new image of the body of Christ. We are supposed to be engaged and involved in the process of initiation and provide it mountainous support.... Small Christian communities have the potential and will play a crucial role and perform a wonderful ministry.... My hope in the future is to implement the process in the Chinese Community and have more laymen and laywomen to get involved...."

Agnes Koo

continued from page 4

Too easily the expression that comes to mind in hard times is "When the going gets tough, the tough get going." This is all right as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. There is no joy in it, just the granite stare, jut-jawed determination, and so on. But what is so redeeming to observe in Forum's membership at this moment is a real determination coupled with that mysterious joy that is of a piece with Forum's unique share in

the ministry of evangelization. It is this kind of joy that wins hearts, transforms suffering, encourages generosity, creates opportunities for bringing the best out of people in circumstances that so easily dishearten. May we never lose such spirit or the Spirit of Christ, who enables us to face real problems and sufferings and find in them the seeds of something new. This we will do together. And it tastes of grace-filled toughness *and* joy!

25 Years Ago: Remembering the Senanque Symposium

By Tom Ivory



Tom Ivory

Recently, I was reflecting with Jim Schellman on this 25th anniversary year of the Senanque Symposium, held in June 1978. I suggested that it would be a good idea to have someone record the history of this historic gathering. Some of the principal participants have already died, and the rest of us are not getting any younger! Jim asked me to be that “someone,” and so I will try to tell the story of Senanque,

which preceded the founding of the North American Forum on the Catechumenate by nearly four years.

Christiane Brusselmans, the great Belgian catechist, had a “dream” to gather an international group to reflect on the experience of the catechumenate and to advance its implementation. At a workshop on the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* in the Newark Archdiocese in 1977, I shared Christiane’s hopes with Joan Knorr, a representative of the William H. Sadlier Publishing Company. Joan, in turn, brought the idea to Ralph Fletcher, Sadlier’s President. Ralph asked for a meeting to discuss the project.

Thanks to the organizational ability of Msgr. Ron Amandolare, Director of Religious Education for the Paterson Diocese, and Deacon Bill Reedy, Director of Catechetics for Sadlier, the Symposium was planned for June 1978. In the process, the gathering had become endorsed by four national organizations in the United States, and their representatives would be in attendance: the National Conference of Diocesan Directors of Religious Education (now National Conference for

Catechetical Leadership), the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, the National Organization for Continuing Education of the Roman Catholic Clergy, and the National Catholic Education Association.

The attitude of Ralph Fletcher, President of Sadlier, contributed to the enthusiasm of those who participated in the Symposium:

“When in August, 1977, we decided to fund the symposium on Christian Initiation and the catechumenate, we were well aware that we were taking a step into the future. We were aware also that in taking this step there was risk as well as exhilarating adventure and the opportunity to serve.... It was evident to us, then, that the next step into the future encompassed Christian Initiation.... We shall take other steps, but this we see as the future of religious education, liturgical growth, parish renewal, and evangelization.”

(Becoming a Catholic Christian: A Symposium on Christian Initiation, edited by William J. Reedy; New York: William H. Sadlier Publishing Co., 1978, p. 4)

Thirty-two people from Africa, Belgium, France, and the United States gathered at the 12th century Cistercian Abbey at Senanque in southern France during the third

week of June 1978. They came from different backgrounds, offering theological, liturgical, catechetical, and pastoral expertise. Papers had been prepared and were presented for discussion, and as the week unfolded a spirit of community evolved through the sharing of a common vision and our special liturgical celebrations. A smaller group stayed an extra week at St. Siffret to translate and edit the papers and prepare the materials for publication under the supervision of Bill Reedy.

The depth and breadth of the whole experience reflected the

continued on next page

“Thirty-two people from Africa, Belgium, France, and the United States gathered at the 12th century Cistercian Abbey at Senanque during the third week of June 1978.... The depth and breadth of the whole experience reflected the quality of the participants, nearly two-thirds of whom were also presenters. From a perspective of 25 years, it is a blessing to remember the brilliant scholarship and teaching style of Father Michel Dujarier, who applied his doctoral studies in Paris on the catechumenate to bear great fruit through his pastoral work in West Africa.”

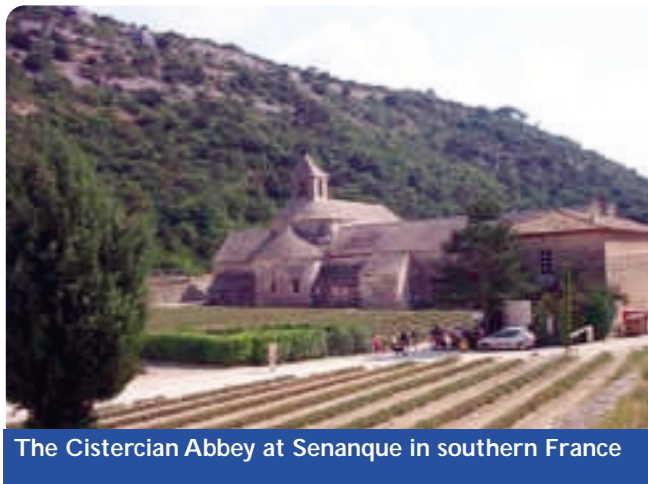
quality of the participants, nearly two-thirds of whom were also presenters. From a perspective of 25 years, it is a blessing to remember the brilliant scholarship and teaching style of Father Michel Dujarier, who applied his doctoral studies in Paris on the catechumenate to bear great fruit through his pastoral work in West Africa. The multi-cultural challenges of the catechumenate were effectively presented by several American participants: Sister Teresita Weind, SND, Coordinator for Black Religious Education in the Chicago Archdiocese, Father Virgil Elizondo of the Mexican American Cultural Center in San Antonio, and Father Albert Benavides, pastor in the San Antonio Archdiocese.

Others taking part included Father Henri Bourgeois, Director of the Center of the Catechumenate in Lyons, who spoke on experience of the catechumenate in France, Sister Therese Randolph, RSM, of the Catholic University of America, speaking on the experience of the catechumenate in the United States, and Father Theophile Villaca, Director of the Catechetical Center in Ouidah, Benin, who reflected with Michel Dujarier on the ministries of initiation.

Jim Dunning was being introduced to the vision of the catechumenate. He, Jim Parker (pastor and seminary professor in Oregon), and I offered reflections on the four periods of the catechumenal process. We benefited from listening to the practical experiences of catechumenate leaders from Africa and France, helping to fulfill Christiane's "dream." The presence of Father Joseph Gelineau, SJ, and his teaching about the symbols of Christian initiation were a special gift.

We had two American bishops with us at the Symposium: Bishop Maurice Dingman of Des Moines and Bishop John Cummins of Oakland. Bishop Dingman's paper, like other Symposium presentations, contained a series of prophetic passages that could continue to challenge pastoral leadership today:

"As I put the finishing touches on this paper it is the month of March. I am just beginning a series of



The Cistercian Abbey at Senanque in southern France

Confirmations that will cover the months of March, April and May. These Confirmation ceremonies will take me into 43 parishes, some of them as far away as 170 miles. These ceremonies, as well as the travel to and from, will consume more than 200 hours of my time as well as 4,000 miles of travel.

Could that time and that energy be spent more profitably in pastoral visitations and in promoting the catechumenate?

... I am convinced that the bishop could use his limited time and energies much more effectively than he does presently What would happen if a bishop were to see a large part of his ministry in terms of involvement in the whole catechumenal process?

... I would characterize the Christian community in my diocese as a "slumbering giant." The people have benefited greatly from their participation in movements, e.g., Cursillo, Charismatic, Better World... Teens Encounter Christ, etc. New structures abound in the councils of priests and sisters as well as parish, regional and diocesan pastoral councils. New attitudes have been formed in accordance with Vatican II documents. But there is little awareness of the potentiality that resides in that faith community. Gifts of mind and heart abound. How can these charisms be tapped and put into operation for the good of the Church?

What is needed is an awakening of this 'slumbering giant.' I suggest that the RCIA is the explosive bomb that can alert the faith community to its potentiality for evangelization.... I am convinced that the RCIA might well be the most important document, along with the apostolic Exhortation on Evangelization, to come from Rome since the Vatican II documents themselves. These two documents need each other. They are complementary."

(*Becoming*, pp. 156-157)

continued

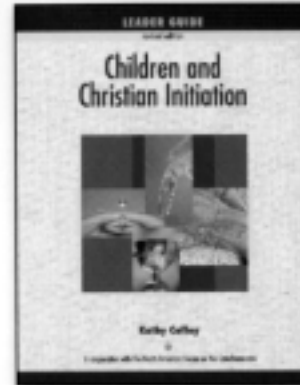
Prepare children for the important passage into the community of faith

Children and Christian Initiation

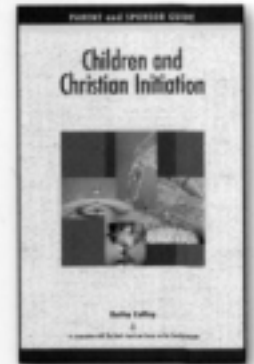
by Kathy Coffey

This new revised edition includes the best age-appropriate ways to implement the initiation process with children. *The Leader Guide* contains everything you need to prepare the child before the rites and reflect upon their meaning afterwards. *The Parent and Sponsor Guide* explains the four periods of the catechumenate and suggests activities

for each. The colorful *Journals* invite children to record their thoughts and drawings as they participate in the process of initiation.




Leader Guide \$19.95



Parent and Sponsor Guide \$4.95

Journal, ages 7-10 \$5.95

Journal, ages 11-14 \$5.95

 **Living the Good News**
www.livingthegoodnews.com

To order call:
1-800-824-1813
(mention offer #FN07)

Tremendous energy was generated by the Symposium at Senanque. Later that summer Sadlier sponsored three weeklong institutes on the catechumenate in three parts of the United States. Some of us were privileged to minister with Christiane Brusselmans at the first institute, held at Salve Regina College, Newport, Rhode Island. These weeks were the forerunners of the "Beginnings and Beyond" Institutes of Forum. The response of the parish and diocesan participants was enthusiastically contagious in helping the vision to spread around North America.

Three and a half years after Senanque, and once again at the invitation of Christiane Brusselmans, two groups gath-

ered within a week of each other, one in Estes Park, Colorado, the other in Calgary, Alberta. Christiane recognized the passion and availability of Jim Dunning to begin an organization to become known as the North American Forum on the Catechumenate. As we move forward in implementing this great vision of the Church, we are deeply indebted to those who have prepared the groundwork and those whose memories we cherish, especially Christiane Busselmans, Jim Dunning, and Bill Reedy.

"... I am convinced that the bishop could use his limited time and energies much more effectively than he does presently.... What would happen if a bishop were to see a large part of his ministry in terms of involvement in the whole catechumenal process outlined in the RCIA?"

Bishop Maurice Dingman

Tom Ivory is pastor of the Church of the Presentation in Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, and a longtime member of the Forum Team.

La Liturgia Catequiza

By Rosanne Belpedio, CSJ



Rosanne Belpedio, CSJ

Hay una relación entre la liturgia y la catequesis que está mencionada en algunos documentos importantes de la iglesia como, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, *Catechesi Tradendae*, el *Directorio General de la Catequesis* y el *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica*. Vale la pena para nosotros, ministros de la iniciación cristiana, explorar esta

relación íntegra entre la liturgia y la catequesis.

Se dice que la liturgia nos enseña. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* en el número 33 nos señala: “Aunque la sagrada liturgia sea principalmente culto de la divina Majestad, contiene también una gran instrucción para el pueblo fiel.” El concepto tiene que ver con una larga tradición desde el concilio de Trento que dice que la liturgia debe fomentar la catequesis de la palabra en el corazón del creyente, SC #33. El *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica* en el número 1074 dice que la “liturgia es el lugar privilegiado de la Catequesis.” También dice en el número 2688, “La Catequesis... está orientada a que la Palabra de Dios se medite en la oración personal, se actualice en la oración litúrgica y se interiorice en todo tiempo a fin de fructificar en una vida nueva.”

¿Qué tiene que ver todo eso con la Iniciación? Para muchas personas esto significa que debemos aprovechar la instancia de la liturgia para *instruir* a la gente. Piensan que es necesario explicar el significado de cada gesto, acción y palabra del rito. Pero creo que la interpretación más adecuada es que su *participación, plena, activa y consciente*, en la liturgia es una instancia de aprendizaje en sí misma. Es decir, cuando una persona abre su corazón para orar entra en un momento de comunión con el Señor y con la comunidad orante. Este acontecimiento

está impregnado de fuerza para transformar su corazón y suscitar los frutos del espíritu en ella.

Recientemente tuve una experiencia que muestra este proceso. Al principio del año estaba dando un pequeño curso para introducir el *Rito de la Iniciación Cristiana de Adultos* a un grupo de Catequistas en Chile. Compartí con el grupo un método de oración. Es una adaptación de la Lectio Divina, que había aprendido desde hace muchos años del Padre Armando Nigro, SJ. Expliqué lo que íbamos a hacer y que uno aprende el método viviéndolo. Pedí el silencio necesario y entramos en nuestra oración.

Al evaluar la experiencia me confesaron que la descripción fue poco atrayente. No entraron con ganas. Pero hicieron el esfuerzo para vivir la oración. Con su comentario perspicaz un participante me hizo pensar otra vez sobre el método de oración. Él comentaba: no solamente nos hizo rezar, sino que nos catequizó, porque nos llevó a los tres niveles de comprensión: *saber, integrar y responder*.

Al terminar la oración se dieron cuenta de lo siguiente:

- *aprendieron* lo que significaba la Palabra
- *relacionaron* la Palabra con su vida
- *manifestaron* a la Palabra con hechos concretos.

El hecho de escuchar la misma Palabra tres veces, pero con distinto propósito cada vez los dejó captar el mensaje, internalizarlo y responder a él.

Ofrezco esta experiencia sencilla como un ejemplo de cómo a través de la liturgia uno puede aprender.

Si desea comentar sobre el artículo, por favor puede comunicarse con Hna. Rosanne, por correo electrónico: rosanneb19@hotmail.com

Rosanne Belpedio, CSJ ha servido como directora de Iniciación Cristiana de Adultos en la Arquidiócesis de Los Angeles. Actualmente esta comenzando un nuevo ministerio entre los Latinos del desierto alto en la Diócesis de San Bernardino.

RESOURCE REVIEWS

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults: A Pastoral Liturgical Commentary (Revised Edition)



James Bessert

By *J. Michael McMahon*

Published by Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions Paper, \$15.00 (U.S.), 202 pages

Reviewed by *James Bessert*

This revised commentary on the *Rite of Christian Initiation of*

Adults is subtitled, “a pastoral liturgical commentary.”

The pastoral concerns of those who work in the ministry of initiation have changed over the years, and these new and changing concerns are addressed by author J. Michael McMahon, President of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians and a member of the Forum Team.

McMahon provides relevant background and documentation to each of the periods covered by the Rite as well as the actual sacraments of initiation. Through his pastoral and liturgical reflections he gives us insights into the most recent questions and concerns regarding initiation. In the process he encourages ministers to follow good liturgical principles, including adaptation of the liturgical celebrations to the local community.

Two pressing issues facing those in the ministry of initiation that McMahon addresses in particular are: (1) the number of children of catechetical age coming forward for initiation and (2) the fact that in the United States baptized candidates in the process (mostly those preparing for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church) outnumber catechumens by two to one.

The first concern, that of *the number of children of cate-*

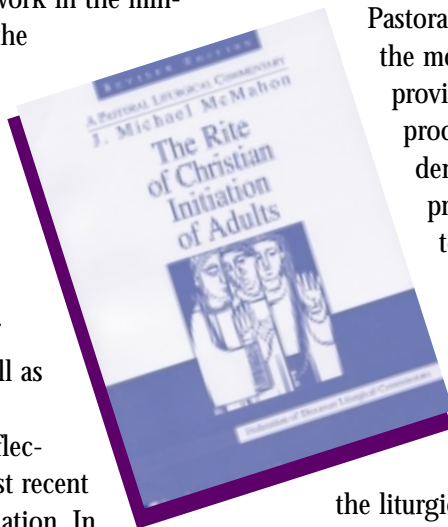
chetical age coming forward for initiation, calls for sensitivity on the part of all involved with them, particularly liturgical planners. Questions arise because children have specific needs that sometimes conflict with the needs of the larger community. Does one then simplify the Rite, making sure prayers are at the level a child can understand, or does one have separate liturgies with children (at the risk of causing alienation from the community)? Does one need to consider if a large celebration would frighten or intimidate children? Many pastoral issues need to be addressed and can become time consuming, and often are neglected. McMahon emphasizes that if we are welcoming communities, we need to take the time to deal with these questions.

The second concern, *the number of baptized candidates* in relation to the number of catechumens, challenges accepted ways of implementing the Rite.

Pastoral experience indicates the need to make the most of and to build upon the adaptations provided in the Rite for candidates in the process. The baptismal status of candidates demands pastoral sensitivity as they progress into full communion. They are to be welcomed and to be prepared for sacraments in ways that show understanding of and respect for our common baptism. Active participation through music, prayers, gesture, etc. should be encouraged in order to include the candidates in all aspects of the liturgical celebrations.

This revised commentary on the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* will be of real value to those in the ministry of initiation. The thought-provoking pastoral reflections should prove helpful for a better implementation of the Rite by both those new to this ministry and those who have been working in the field.

Jim Bessert, a presbyter of the Diocese of Saginaw, is currently pastor of Saint Brigid Parish, Midland, Michigan. Jim serves on the Diocesan Initiation Team and is an active consultant in the areas of Christian initiation, ministry, parish life, liturgy, worship space design and sacramental practice.



RESOURCE REVIEWS

Agenda for the Small Church: A Handbook for Rural Ministry

By Members of the Collegium for Rural Ministry



Michael Clay

Published by The National Catholic Rural Life Conference, Des Moines, IA. Paper, \$10.00 (U.S.), 199 pages

Reviewed by Michael Clay

For over 15 years I have been fascinated by the differences that exist between ministry and life in the rural settings of North America and their suburban and urban counterparts. As I became acquainted with resources that could provide insight into the world of rural and small-town people and ministry, I was startled to learn that most of it came from the Protestant traditions. Eventually I became aware of a fledgling group of people who were attempting to create resources that spoke more directly to the Catholic reality of rural life and ministry. They called themselves the Collegium for Rural Ministry. In 1988 they produced a book entitled *Ministry in the Small Church*, a wonderful overview of rural life and ministry from a Catholic perspective. Ten years later, members of this same group produced another volume entitled *Agenda for the Small Church* to assist ministers and pastoral theologians who are interested in the Church in rural North America.

The earlier work painted rural life and ministry in broad strokes and served well as a general overview of this world. *Agenda for the Small Church*, while recapitulating many of the main points of the earlier book, paints with smaller brushes and in greater detail the reality of rural life and ministry. It is geared to seasoned rural ministers and newcomers as well as to those who are interest-

ed in a more sophisticated understanding of the sociological, anthropological, and theological dimensions of rural and small town life and ministry.

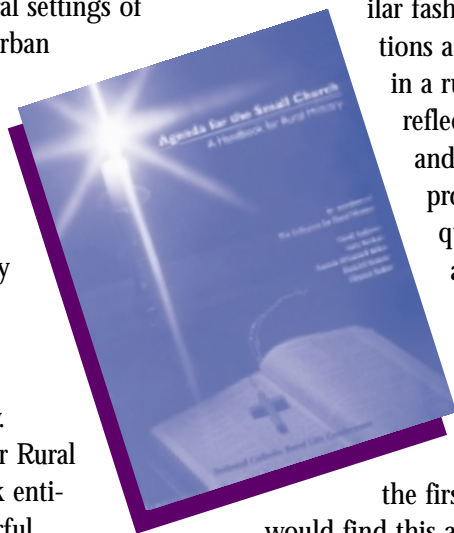
Agenda is divided into two parts. The first might be described as a workbook. It covers three general areas of interest to those ministering in this setting: (a) building up the parish through faith and educational formation; (b) ministerial roles and responsibilities in the rural setting, especially leadership; and (c) fostering discipleship within and beyond the parish.

Each section addresses several areas. For example, the section on ministerial roles explores such topics as pastoring by a priest, pastoring by non-ordained ministers, parish structures for pastoral care of parishioners, decision-making, volunteers, conflict management, and stewardship. Each specific topic proceeds in a similar fashion. First, it lays out relevant questions a minister or group of people serving in a rural setting could use for discussion or reflection. Next, it provides a sociological and theological overview of the topic to provide background for the discussion questions. This section is highly readable and would be very useful to those who are practitioners of rural ministry. A newly arrived pastor would find this reflection-explanation method very useful, especially if coming into rural ministry for the first time. A seasoned pastor or minister

would find this an excellent resource to help a local parish grow in its self-awareness as a rural parish.

The second part of the book consists of extended, more nuanced reflections on issues shaping rural life and ministry. The first article deals with the complexity of rural life and makes it clear that a one-size-fits-all approach to rural life and ministry does not apply to every rural or small town parish. Differences in geography, proximity to urban areas, economy, proportion of Catholics to other religions in the area, etc. will create parishes that may look quite different from one another while still being categorized as "rural." The second article

continued on page 13



New Confirmation Program for Teens



SEND OUT YOUR SPIRIT

A Confirmation Handbook for Faith

Michael Amodei

Send Out Your Spirit offers a comprehensive program for teens preparing for the sacrament of Confirmation. The program is unique because teens possess its main content in the *Candidate's Handbook*. The *Handbook* provides a survey of beliefs and practices in the Catholic tradition, with special focus on God's Spirit in our lives and the celebration of Confirmation. The entire program — the *Candidate's Handbook*, and the doctrinal material in the *Leader's Manual* — has been found in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church by the US Bishops' Ad Hoc Committee to Oversee the Use of the Catechism.

CANDIDATE'S HANDBOOK:

0-87793-952-7 / 256 pages, 6" x 9", \$9.95

The format for each chapter of the *Candidate's Handbook* revolves around introducing a topic with a relevant story or short lesson. Each main section includes discussion or journaling questions. The chapters also include one or two personal interest features, frequently asked questions (with answers), quotations from Scripture or writings of the saints, and traditional prayers.

LEADER'S MANUAL:

ISBN: 0-87793-951-9 / 224 pages, 8 1/2" x 11", \$22.95

The *Leader's Manual* is closely connected to the material in the *Candidate's Handbook*. It provides several "how to use" tips for catechists and other adult leaders to break open the material lessons intended for either large or small groups.



MICHAEL AMODEI

is an editor of adolescent religious education materials at Ave Maria Press. He has authored and edited several books for teens and catechists, including *Jump Start* and *Questions of Faith*. Mike has been a parish Director of Religious Education, a Youth Minister, and a high school theology teacher. For over twenty years, he has been a coordinator and catechist helping teens prepare for the sacrament of Confirmation.

At bookstores or



ave maria press / notre dame, indiana 46556-0428

1.800.282.1865 / avemariapress.com

AA0903MO

continued from page 12

addresses the importance of community and discusses the pros and cons of urban/suburban and rural approaches to community, suggesting that the reality of community in rural life may make a valuable contribution to a mature and biblical understanding of community. The third article addresses rural life and ministry through a sociological and cultural lens. Particularly insightful are the comments concerning the importance of relationship in rural life and ministry. The last article addresses the role God plays in rural communities. The author of this article describes how rural people image God and how rural people relate to God in light of their sociological setting.

This is a great book. It will stretch any reader, whether he or she is in need of a resource to reflect on the present reality of a particular rural or small town parish or is in need of some intellectually stimulating insights about rural life and ministry in general.

A Forum Team member, Michael Clay is a presbyter of the Diocese of Raleigh, where he has served as pastor and director of liturgy. He is now Diocesan Vocation Director. Michael's book, A Harvest for God: Christian Initiation in the Rural and Small-Town Parish, has just been published by Liturgy Training Publications of Chicago.

2003 - 2004 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

November 2-7, 2003, Diocese of Charleston (SC) - Spanish

June 20-25, 2004, St. John's University, Jamaica (NY)

June 13-18, 2004, Diocese of Amarillo (TX)

June 6-11, 2004, Archdiocese of Cincinnati (OH)

July 11-16, 2004, Diocese of Orlando (FL)

July 11-16, 2004, Diocese of Gary (IN) - with a rural focus

July 18-23, 2004, Diocese of Dallas (TX) - with focus on adults and children

July 18-23, 2004, Archdiocese of Ottawa, Ontario (CAN)

July 25-30, 2004, Diocese of Winona (MN)

August 1-6, 2004, Diocese of Ogdensburg (NY) - with a dialogue group on Children's issues

August 1-6, 2004, Diocese of Lake Charles (LA) - with a dialogue group for Clergy

■ BEGINNINGS "PLUS" INSTITUTE

January 22-25, 2004, Diocese of Las Vegas (NV)

July 15-18, 2004, Diocese of Trenton (NJ)

November 11-14, 2004, Diocese of Greensburg (PA)

■ BEGINNINGS INSTITUTE

■ INITIATION IN RURAL AND SMALL PARISHES

November 8, 2003, Diocese of Des Moines (IA)

■ 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.

■ PRECATECHUMENATE

■ CATECHUMENATE

■ PURIFICATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT

■ MYSTAGOGY

■ CHILDREN AND CHRISTIAN INITIATION

June 4-6, 2004, Archdiocese of Moncton, New Brunswick (CAN)

June 11-13, 2004, Diocese of Phoenix (AZ)

■ CONCERNING THE BAPTIZED

■ 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

■ ECHOING GOD'S WORD

October 16-18, 2003, Diocese of Charlotte (NC)

August 12-14, 2004, Diocese of Portland (ME)

■ FURTHERING THE INITIATION EXPERIENCE

■ IMAGING THE INITIATION PROCESS IN SMALL CHURCH COMMUNITIES

June 11-13, 2004, Diocese of Richmond (VA)

October 29-31, 2004, Archdiocese of St. Louis (MO)

■ PRAYING THE RITES

■ THE RECONCILIATION EXPERIENCE INSTITUTE explores the faces of alienation and methods of reaching out to the alienated. Examines theological, pastoral, and psychological implications of reconciliation. Celebrate liturgical rites.

New Reconciliation Institute TBA!

■ 2004 INSTITUTES TO BE DETERMINED

*Ambassadors of Christ: Building Reconciling Communities
Diocese of Rochester (NY)*

Beginnings and Beyond, Diocese of Cheyenne (WY)

Concerning the Baptized, Archdiocese of Philadelphia (PA)

Northern California

Southern California

Chicago (IL)

Diocese of Grand Rapids (MI)

Archdiocese of Seattle (WA)

Diocese of Spokane (WA)

Diocese of Victoria, British Columbia (CAN)

Archdiocese of Winnipeg, Manitoba (CAN)



The North American Forum on the Catechumenate

3033 Fourth St. NE, Washington, DC 20017-1102

(202) 529-9493 • fax (202) 529-9497 • E-mail: info@naforum.org

Check our website www.naforum.org for the latest calendar and resource updates