



**LITURGY:**  
THE PRIVILEGED PLACE OF  
**CATECHESIS**

*They recognized him in the breaking of bread*

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**2007 National Meeting of  
Diocesan Liturgical Commissions**

**Hartford**

## **SUMMARY OF STUDY MORNINGS**

By Rita Thiron, Facilitator

Good Morning!

Your program booklet states that in less than an hour and a half, Paul [Turner], Carole [Eipers] and I will try to summarize the study mornings. This is a daunting task - almost as impossible as talking about the relationship of liturgy and catechesis in a few days. But we will try to reflect on what we have all accomplished here and what promise it holds for the future.



We were invited by the BCL, the national office and a hard-working local committee to address the issue of "Liturgy as the Privileged Place of Catechesis."

But that was preceded by an even greater summons — we were also called by God at our baptism, and like the people of Ephesus, we were reminded that some are called as "apostles [or successors to them], others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers" but always gifted by grace "for building up the body of Christ until we attain the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God" (Ephesians 4:11-13).

And so we kingdom builders gathered, in a ballroom in Hartford, CT, to examine our varied and mutual roles in Christ's Church.

We came prepared having read articles by Schellman and Ostdiek, Dooley and Baumbach, Groome and Varga...

We were privileged to spend time with two excellent presenters, whose scholarship



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challenged us, whose insights inspired us, and whose passion and creativity astounded us.

We dialogued at tables with esteemed colleagues and new friends...

And we mourned the loss of a liturgical and musical genius [Rev. Lucien Deiss]...

We received folders with concise charts - treasures that could be used at future workshops - and perused bibliographies that identified trusted sources...

And if we looked closely, we read the small cards on our tables that quoted Scripture, Patristic literature, and recent documents.

And we prayed.

We celebrated the liturgies of the Church and entered more fully into a paschal mystery that we can never fully grasp, but encountered a living God who is present among us and who reveals his great love for us in word and sacrament. And it was in these liturgies that God's word was best "echoed down" and where we were most fully "catechized."

On Wednesday morning, we listened with awed admiration and rapt attention as Father Paul Turner examined how the liturgy catechizes. He reminded us how

Our buildings have always been shaped by and mold liturgical praxis - in their shape and decor; the shape, size and placement of the font, the centrality of the altar, and in the location of the tabernacle.

The liturgy catechizes in rubrics that express unity, but also delineate rank.

The liturgy catechizes with people whose age confuses our theology of a sacrament and whose baptismal status is sometimes muddled by when and how we welcome them into our faith community.

And finally, Paul reminded us how the liturgy catechizes with new translations that will provide more elegant language and one that may confuse essential theology.

But buildings, rubrics, people, and texts, only serve to equip us for the real task of liturgy... to



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worship almighty God and to sanctify his people so that they may serve one another in love.

On Thursday morning, we entered into an approved liturgical dance with our sure-footed partner, Dr. Carole Eipers. From the perspective of a catechist, we examined the relationship between Liturgy and Catechesis and appreciated catechesis as both an overture to and reprise to liturgical celebrations. Under her well-choreographed tutelage, we entered into a dance of discipleship and appreciated anew the evangelizing power of our ritual.

Still dancing along (though not all with tap shoes) we realized that catechists need liturgists:

- to provide expert advice
- to enhance participation
- to offer kairos in a chronos world
- to embrace sacred silence
- to reveal beauty
- to expose idols
- to enter sacred space
- and to tell the important stories of our faith
- that offer hope in a troubled world

And we more fully appreciated that liturgists need catechists...

- since they offer an introduction to the mysteries celebrated in liturgy
- they help us explore more fully Sacred Scripture and Tradition
- catechesis frees the liturgy to be liturgy, promoting knowledge of the faith, moral formation, and skills for prayer
- it can offer age-appropriate formation
- and can attend to the needs of each person
- and can tell and retell our stories of faith and tradition
- since true catechesis promotes dialogue

And in our mutual dance of discipleship, together we share the Good News of Jesus Christ.



## SYNTHESIS OF TABLE DISCUSSIONS

All comments will be posted to the website. Please refer to the handout which synthesizes your discussions on Wednesday and Thursday. You told us of important strategies that could be and should be implemented at the parish, in diocesan offices and commissions, and by this federation.

### PARISH

Catechesis firmly rooted in the Word and centered on the person of Jesus Christ

At the heart of catechesis we find, in essence, a person, the person of Jesus of Nazareth... It is the definitive nature of catechesis to put people not only in touch with but in communion with Jesus Christ... (CT 5)

Liturgy celebrated well.

faithful to the liturgical books  
collaborative preparation  
careful selection of texts, options  
preaching based on the Word and euchology

Catechesis on the liturgy that focuses on its theology, its communal nature, and on the participation of the assembly.

Developing a staff structure that encourages collaboration.

DRE on PWC  
Liturgist on Educ Commission  
All on RCIA Team

Sacramental preparation based upon the rites.

Develop or revise parish sacramental policies

RCIA model for all catechesis (RCIA 75)

"accommodated to the liturgical year...supported by celebrations of the word"  
familiarity with the Christian way of life



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liturgical rites  
apostolic activity

More opportunities for mystagogical reflection and the tools to do it well.

Regular evaluation of liturgical celebrations and liturgical catechesis.

Music at all rites and the development of repertoire of music for the rites

Regular, ongoing, age-appropriate catechesis including programing, bulletin inserts, and well-prepared worship aids.

**DIOCESAN**

Catechist and teacher certification processes should include training in the liturgical books, year

Regular communication which cultivates common understanding

Share resources and develop common libraries, including FDLC materials.

Collaborate in the production of diocesan guidelines and policies, e.g., confirmation.

Co-sponsor workshops with offices of Catechesis, Catholic Schools, Formation.

Develop common standards for sacramental preparation programs based upon the prae-notanda, texts, actions, and symbols of the rite. Consult with pastors, parents, experts in catechesis.

Provide consultations services to those who review textbooks and curriculum.

Be generous with materials; provide sample prayer services, celebrations of the word,



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reconciliation services, and handouts.

Further dialogue on the role of the Bishop and the RCIA.

**FDLC**

When preparing materials for the Roman Missal Project, consult experts in catechesis and other disciplines regarding content and methodology.

Produce simple reproducible handouts that can be used as tools, e.g., worksheets for the preparation of Mass; definition of terms, bulletin inserts on various rites.

Members should increase promotion of FDLC materials, including *Mystery of Faith*; market to religious ed offices and schools.

Promote website access to all, especially our liturgical catechesis pages.

Highlight diocesan offices who are “doing good work” and showcase best practices.

Encourage ongoing inter-organizational dialogue, including a joint meeting with the NCCL.

More events like these - opportunities to study.

Publish this week’s talks by Eiper and Turner.

Produce catechetical material on the Rite of Reception into Full Communion.

Publications for each liturgical minister.

To make more concrete what we have experienced, Carole and Paul will now summarize our discussions on the role of liturgy and catechesis, on the role of the liturgist and the catechist, in a more very common case study, infant baptism.



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**DIOCESAN OFFICE**

proper celebration of the rite  
statutes and canons  
the salvation of souls  
proper locus for the rite - at Mass, privately, season of year  
role of the parish assembly  
role of bishop as chief catechist and liturgist (and our duty to assist him)  
collaboration with office of catechesis, formation programs  
music

**READING**

Emmaus Story Luke 24:27-35

**Rita Thiron**, the Facilitator of the Study Mornings during the 2007 National Meeting, serves the Diocese of Lansing in the Office of Worship. She is Vice-Chair of the FDLC Board of Directors, and serves as a representative from Region 6.