Mystagogy and On-going Adult Faith Formation

A TREATISE

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Mystagogy and On-going Adult Faith Formation

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Results of a national survey, *Journey to the Fullness of Life: A Report on the Implementation of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults in the United States*, published in 2000 by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops identifies mystagogy, the final period of RCIA, as the weakest aspect of the process and recommends that it be restored “in practice and better utilized as a time of catechesis and of a deeper incorporation into the mysteries already celebrated as well as the life of the local parish.” However, this writer proposes that mystagogy’s four essential elements: community, catechesis, liturgy, and mission not only provide a framework for the faith formation of neophytes but also for lifelong formation of all baptized adults. Mystagogy, broadly understood, also exemplifies a catechetical method that leads adults to deeper conversion and maturity in faith. To substantiate these claims, the writer first researched the historical development of mystagogy, its nature, characteristics, and elements in conjunction with church documents and other reputable sources on the Church’s vision of the Catholic adult, its efforts/programs in adult faith formation, and adult faith development.

Secondly, she designed and facilitated a six-hour training workshop for parish ministers in two Texas parishes enabling them to understand the process of mystagogy and to identify ways to create an integrated process, namely mystagogy, for the continuing faith formation of adults. Participants reviewed three models of postbaptismal mystagogy and the four movements in mystagogical catechesis within the context of three significant adult life experiences: the
sacrament of matrimony, the birth of a child, and the Sunday homily. They planned and implemented mystagogical catechesis for one significant adult faith experience in their parish.

Positive feedback from participants’ workshop evaluations and their experience as facilitators of mystagogical catechesis, support the writer’s belief in its viability for the on-going faith formation of Catholic adults and affirm her recommendations that parishes provide mystagogical catechesis for all the sacraments and other significant life experiences of adults to foster their conversion and maturity in faith.
This treatise by Guadalupe Ramirez fulfills the treatise requirement for the doctoral degree in Doctor of Ministry approved by Rev. Dr. Mark Morozowich, S.E.O.D., as Director, Dr. Margaret Mary Kelleher, OSU, Ph.D., and Msgr. Dr. Stephen J. Rossetti, D. Min., Ph.D., as readers.

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General Introduction

Mystagogy can be understood in various ways. In the contemporary church it is the final period in the process of Christian initiation of adults into the Catholic Church. It is also a catechetical method, known as mystagogical catechesis which leads the newly baptized adults from reflection on the experience of Christian initiation to understanding of its deeper meanings, as an experience of God who is mystery, in light of the Christian Story and Tradition, which elicits a faith response and commitment to Christ and his mission in the Christian community.

The writer believes that postbaptismal mystagogy is appropriate for all of the sacraments and also beyond the Church’s official rites, namely the pivotal experiences of human life that cause believers to plumb the spiritual dimension of their experiences and find new meaning to the joyful as well as painful experiences in their journey of faith. Mystagogy invites adults into a life-long process of conversion as Catholic Christians.

In this paper, she explores postbaptismal mystagogy as both process and catechetical method for the on-going faith formation of adults in Catholic parishes. Chapter one presents the definition, nature, and characteristics of mystagogy through its historical development: inaugurated by the fathers of the early church, restored by Vatican II through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, and implemented in the contemporary church. It also describes the inter-relationship of each of its four essential elements: community, liturgy, catechesis, and mission that provide the framework for neophytes and for all of the baptized to grow in faith.

Chapter two contains evidence of the Church’s commitment to the on-going faith formation of adults. The writer proposes three pivotal experiences in adult life as examples of the contribution that mystagogy can make to adult faith formation: matrimony, the birth of a child,
and the Sunday homily. She presents a four-movement process for mystagogical catechesis suitable for these and other experiences in adult life.

In chapter three, the writer describes each step of her pilot project, a six-hour training workshop on mystagogy with parish ministers in two Texas parishes. She designed the process and provided input to increase their knowledge of mystagogy and deepen their understanding of its elements and its contribution to the on-going faith formation of adults. She facilitated their discussion and selection of three experiences of adults conducive for mystagogical catechesis, one of which they planned for implementation in their parishes.

The evaluations of the workshop by participants and the writer’s observations and insights on the effectiveness of the workshop are in the fourth and final chapter. The writer challenges parishes to make adult faith formation the center of their catechetical ministry. She urges them to utilize mystagogical catechesis for all the sacraments as well as for pivotal experiences of joy and pain in adult life which will free them to deepen their relationship with Christ, to grow in faith and compassion, to form stronger Christian communities, to live more authentic lives and become more effective evangelizers in the world.
CHAPTER I

MYSTAGOGY:

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION
Introduction

This chapter explores the historical development of mystagogy, beginning with its definition, and traces its characteristics and elements within the Catholic tradition introduced by the patristic fathers of the early church, re-established through the restoration of the catechumenate by Vatican Council II, and implemented in the contemporary church in the United States. Sources for this exploration include primary sources from the patristic fathers as well as Church documents, the works of theologians, and contemporary experts in pastoral ministry.

Definition and Nature of Mystagogy

Enrico Mazza introduces the contemporary meaning of the term *mystagogy* as one that “signifies catechetical instruction on the sacraments, with special reference to the sacraments of Christian initiation and to the deeper meaning of the liturgical rites.”¹ He explains that “the word *mystagogy* derives from the Greek verb *mueo*, which was always used in a sacral context and meant ‘to teach a doctrine’ and therefore ‘to initiate into mysteries.’”² He adds that “In both the Antiochene and the Alexandrian Fathers, it means the oral or written explanation of the mystery hidden in the Scriptures and celebrated in the liturgy.”³

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² Ibid.

³ Ibid., 2.
The nature of mystagogy is that it is a process that opens the door to deeper conversion after an encounter with God who is mystery. Mystery is experienced through nature, human interactions and relationships, predictable as well as unpredictable events, the five senses, words, symbols, and gestures in the Church’s symbolic rites. In the Jewish tradition, mystery was related to God’s plan for the world. In the New Testament, entrance into mystery was revealed in the person of Jesus Christ, in his ministry, passion, death, and resurrection and the sending of the Holy Spirit. Today, the activity of the Holy Spirit in the Christian community, the church, carries forth God’s saving plan.

**Mystagogy in the Early Church**

The patristic fathers, Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 387), Ambrose of Milan (d.391), John Chrysostom (d. 407), and Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. 428) introduced the process of mystagogy for catechumens and neophytes. Cyril of Jerusalem and Ambrose of Milan interpreted the mysteries after the neophytes had been initiated while John Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia preached mystagogical homilies prior to baptism but reserved their homilies on the mystery of the Eucharist for after the catechumens were fully initiated, had participated in the entire Mass and received holy communion for the first time. For this paper, the writer has chosen to focus on postbaptismal mystagogy and its contribution to the on-going faith formation of adult Catholics in the contemporary church and society.
From her study of their writings and secondary sources, such as *Saying Amen: A Mystagogy of Sacrament* by Kathleen Hughes, the writer identified seven chief characteristics. First, mystagogy began with the person’s experience of the rites of initiation. The day after they had come up from the waters of baptism, had been anointed, and had shared Eucharist at the table of the Lord with all the other Christians, the neophytes may have been asking themselves: What did I experience? What does it mean? What am I going to do about it? What must they have been wondering as their hearts were so full of joy and amazement? They looked forward to listening to the bishops who would enlighten their understanding of the mysteries they had experienced.

The bishops may have been asking themselves a different question: How do I delve into the meaning of the mysteries in a way that will not only instruct the neophytes but will also inspire and prepare them to live the Christian life? Pamela Jackson describes the purpose and structure of mystagogy in the early Church by stating:

During the patristic period candidates being prepared for baptism were normally not given instruction on the rites of initiation until after they had experienced them at the Paschal Vigil. During the week following their baptism, they returned to the church each day for prayer and preaching in which the various initiatory rites they had experienced (e.g., exorcism, immersion, anointing, clothing, Eucharist, etc.) were explained in detail. The purpose of this post-baptismal instruction was not only to provide information, but to draw the newly-baptized into deepening experience of the mysteries into which they had been initiated; hence it was known as mystagogy.

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Thus, the second characteristic in mystagogy is that they returned to the experience with their memory and imagination, with their emotions and all the senses to be able to understand the meaning of the experience for themselves personally and in the faith life of the community.

Each of these four mystagogues developed their own style of postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogical preaching. The rite was the content and context for mystagogy, a third characteristic. Through their creative imagination they touched the memory and imagination of their listeners reflecting on every part of the rites and enabled them to grasp the deeper meanings of their experience in order to understand and live the paschal mystery in union with Christ. Their homilies wove the interconnectedness between the Scripture readings with the words, symbols, the actions experienced through the seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling, and involvement of the bodily gestures in the rites. The mystagogues embellished the art of preaching by their creative integration of all of these components.

Cyril had the unique privilege of preaching in Jerusalem and utilized the holy places of Jesus’ life and death as the vast classroom for his catechesis. Their familiarity with the physical surroundings enabled the neophytes to step more easily into the life-saving events of Jesus’ life proclaimed in the Scriptures.

Fourth, mystagogy moves from the visible to the invisible. The bishops chose to integrate poignant questions with all of the imagery and Scriptural exhortation in their liturgical homilies in order to immerse the candidates deeper and deeper into the Christian symbolic order. The mystagogues recognized and honored the polyvalent nature of symbol and invited them to speak,
to exert their influence on the human person resulting in a sense of awe at the recognition of being touched by the transcendent God.

Conversion or *metanoia* preceded initiation, requiring a complete rejection of all that was contrary to faith in Christ and an acceptance of Christ through a dramatic profession of faith expressed in word, gesture, and symbol. This profound experience and its impact on the neophyte required interpretation which made mystagogy imperative, as Hugh Riley explains:

The function of mystagogy is to explain this liturgical drama, to reveal as deeply and as widely as possible the meaning of what is said and done. In their first major step in this liturgy of Christian Initiation the four fathers have chosen a variety of materials accessible to the understanding of their hearers in fulfillment of this purpose of interpretation.

Cyril enacts this drama that Riley describes beginning with the rite of renunciation. He asks the candidates to turn toward the West, the place of darkness where Satan is king then to stretch forth their hand and physically push Satan away, rejecting all that he represents. He interprets the meaning of the words and gestures in this way:

‘I renounce thee, Satan,’ — Thou wicked and most cruel tyrant! meaning, ‘I fear thy might no longer; for that Christ hath overthrown, having partaken with me of flesh and blood, that through these *He might by death destroy death*, that I might not be made *subject to bondage* forever.’ ‘I renounce thee,’ — plotter as thou art, who under the guise of friendship didst contrive all disobedience, and work apostasy in our first parents. ‘I renounce thee, Satan,’ — the artificer and abettor of all wickedness.

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7 Ibid.

The visible bodily gesture of turning from the West to the East and publicly speaking the words, “I believe in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost and in one Baptism of repentance…” left an unforgettable visual image in the memory of the neophytes.

The four patristic fathers employed the method of typology for their homilies which is “Christological interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures in which Old Testament persons, events, and symbols stand as types or images of Christ, the church, and the sacramental life.” Cyril’s preaching made the personalities in the Old and New Testaments come alive and serve as companions to the neophytes in their journey of faith. For example, David is a *typos* of repentance and Abraham is a *typos* of faith to encourage the newly baptized to identify (as they are already accustomed from his prebaptismal lectures) with their Scriptural forebears, and then to show them what God accomplished for those people through water, oil, bread, and wine as prophetic explanation of what God has now done for them, the neophytes, through the initiatory rites.

He used the rhetorical device of addressing figures from salvation history, both the witnesses of faith as well as their adversaries, such as Satan, to enable his listeners to visualize the speakers, dialogue with them and understand their own journey of faith.

Ambrose of Milan, Cyril’s contemporary in the West, utilizes allegory in his mystagogical homilies. He grounds his Scriptural explanations in *De Sacramentis* and *De Mysteriis* in one important principle: “The things which are seen are temporal, but the things that

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11 Jackson, “Ambrose of Milan as Mystagogue,” 95.
are not seen are eternal,”¹² and therefore, superior to the temporal. His creativity exemplifies the fifth characteristic in mystagogy that utilizes the language of poetry rather than prose in interpreting the Scriptural passages that illustrate that the salvific act of God the neophytes experienced in baptism is far greater than the one the Jews experienced in crossing the Red Sea.¹³ He selects Old Testament events and natural elements such as the Spirit moving over the waters in creation, Noah freed from the flood, and the Syrian cleansed from leprosy by bathing in the Jordan as allegorical images of baptism. In reflecting on the words of consecration during the Mass, he distinguishes between the power of Christ’s words to change the natural elements of bread and wine into His body and blood as far superior to the words of Elijah who brought down fire from heaven.¹⁴ Riley considers these to be examples of Ambrose’s contribution to mystagogical catechesis, namely that of redeeming the imagination which is a critical characteristic of mystagogy as mentioned earlier.

Due to his theology of the transformation of all the elements of creation, the intersection of the original creation with the redemptive plan of God in the mystery of Christ’s historical death and resurrection, Ambrose is able to see in such liturgical signs as the creative source of water, the tomb and rebirth, the ‘familia candidata’, the fragrance of the assembly of neophytes anointed with myron, in a uniquely imaginative and even sensual way the very beginnings of the new creation achieved in the mystery of Christ and already visible and tangible in the ‘visibility’ and ‘tangibility’ of faith-revealed in the concrete signs of the liturgy.¹⁵


¹³ The actual description is found in “Ambrose of Milan,” no. 12.

¹⁴ See “Ambrose of Milan,” no. 52, to capture the force of his conviction.

¹⁵ Riley, 454.
Ambrose introduced what contemporary theologians now refer to as the sacramental principle: that because of Christ, “God is present to humankind and we respond to God’s grace through the ordinary and everyday of life in the world,” a hallmark of Catholic identity.

A sixth characteristic of mystagogy is the integration of initiation with Christian living. In their homilies, the mystagogues were uncompromisingly clear with the candidates and later with the neophytes in setting forth the life-altering requirements of the Christian life. There is no easy path or temporary commitment in the life of faith. They understood that the decision to believe in Jesus necessarily permeated every aspect of the person’s life in a dramatic and lasting way. Faith was understood as a public activity springing from the witness of the entire community who participated in their initiation into the faith.

John Chrysostom lived in a different culture from that of Cyril, but he too understood how important yet difficult it was for Christians to live the Christian life within a hostile environment. He alerted them to recognize the temptations inherent in society that would lure them away from Christ. Just as Jesus suffered at the hands of evil powers, so the Christian must always position himself/herself against the world. He admonishes them not to receive Eucharist unworthily and betray Christ as Judas did:

But when you neglect the poor man wasting with hunger, or perishing with cold, that man draws upon you the same condemnation... When we plunder, when we oppress those weaker than ourselves, we shall draw upon us severe punishment... for how long shall the love of things present so occupy us, superfluous as they are and unprofitable?...

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17 On page 141 of his book, *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation: the Origins of the RCIA*, Edward Yarnold presents this choice as leaving no other option for the believer.
now we feed dogs, and many of us wild asses ... while we care not for a man perishing with hunger, and a thing that is alien to us is more valued than that which is of our kin, and our own family less honored than creatures which are not so, nor related to us.\textsuperscript{18}

Chrysostom also introduces a seventh characteristic of mystagogy; namely that mystagogy is for all the baptized. Unlike Cyril and Ambrose, he directed his homilies on the Eucharist to all Christians, not just to the neophytes. For Chrysostom, it was crucial for all of the baptized to understand the relationship between baptism and the moral life. In his homilies, he sought to stir the emotions of his hearers to remain constant in practicing Christian virtue and morals. The Eucharist would strengthen them in this spiritual struggle as the power beyond all other powers to combat the enemy of the Christian.

Theodore of Mopsuestia contributes to the development of mystagogy through his emphasis on the eschatological dimension of the sacraments. He concludes his \textit{Commentary on the Lord’s Prayer, Baptism, and the Eucharist} with these words:

After we have thus regulated our life, and known the greatness of the Sacrament, and of the boundless grace to which we have been called; and been solicitous for our salvation, and endeavored to rectify our trespasses in the right way—we shall be deemed as deserving the future hope for the sake of which we have been rendered worthy, by Divine grace to perform this Sacrament. And we shall delight in the Kingdom of Heaven and in all those ineffable and eternal benefits, which all of us will be enabled to receive by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory, now, always, and for ever and ever. Amen.\textsuperscript{19}


As mentioned previously, typology was a powerful approach to Scripture for mystagogical catechesis employed by the patristic fathers yet is not appropriate as a viable method today primarily because of the historical-critical modern approach to Scripture, the tendency toward realism in western art, and the fear of typology leading to anti-Semitism. Unfortunately, the new methodology deprives clergy from learning the skill of interpreting images which overflow with meaning.\footnote{Gail Ramshaw gives more explanation of the new approaches to Scripture in “Typology as Biblical Symbol,” in \textit{Worship: Searching for Language} (Washington, DC: Pastoral Press, 1988): 50 – 51.}

Another characteristic of mystagogy prevalent during the patristic period but not utilized today, was the strong emphasis and practice of secrecy regarding the important elements of the faith. The bishops considered the truths of faith to be too sacred to be shared with the un-baptized. Ambrose points out,

\begin{quote}
The season now warns us to speak of the Mysteries, and to set forth the purport of the sacraments, which if we had thought it well to teach before baptism to those who were not yet initiated, we should be considered rather to have betrayed than to have portrayed the Mysteries . . . the light itself of the Mysteries will shed itself with more effect upon those who are expecting they know not what, than if any discourse had come beforehand.\footnote{“Ambrose of Milan,” no.2.}
\end{quote}

The neophytes were not considered worthy or ready for a full explanation of what was done at liturgy until they had participated in the entire Mass for the first time, as mentioned previously.

The liturgical life of Christians during the patristic period preserved in the writings of Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose of Milan, John Chrysostom, and Theodore of Mopsuestia form part of Christianity’s spiritual heritage. Joseph Martos attests: “Under their guidance the church’s
sacraments developed into a set of richly symbolic rituals, and its sacramental theology grew into Christianity’s first philosophical understanding of those rituals.”

They teach us that appreciation and understanding of the experience of mystery requires subjective reflection on the experience through all of our human faculties, engaging the symbols to discover their meanings, not by reducing them to only one meaning but to be comfortable with the ambiguity, to rejoice in discovering the many possible levels of meaning. In his article, “Symbol, Mystery, and Catechesis: Toward a Mystagogical Approach,” Michael Driscoll cautions contemporary believers not to take away the “awe” of the liturgical experience. The patristic fathers teach through poetry and imagery, how to move from the visible to the invisible to interpret the meaning of the liturgical rite which is both the context and content for catechesis. They challenge believers to remain faithful to Christ in whatever social, cultural, religious, and political environment they find themselves.

Perhaps Yarnold best expresses the contribution of mystagogical preaching to the neophyte’s understanding and embracing of the new life experienced in the Easter sacraments:

Christian initiation is a complex process and can be viewed in several lights. It is a process of developing conversion . . . of spiritual growth; it is a progressive deepening of the candidate’s membership of the Christian community. In these sermons we see another aspect of initiation: it is an experience, above all an experience of awe, calculated to sink into the depths of the candidate’s psyche and to produce a lasting transformation there.

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23 Michael Driscoll’s article is published in *Liturgical Ministry* 7 (Spring 1998): 67–75.

The neophytes relied on the power of the Holy Spirit who strengthened and compelled them to continue facing east as they took daily steps in living as Catholic Christians.

**The Demise and Restoration of the Catechumenate**

Cyril, Ambrose, John, and Theodore ministered to the people of their time and culture unaware that history would drastically change the process for initiating Christians into the Church. Kathleen Hughes states some of the reasons for the demise of mystagogy: “By the early middle ages the community’s baptismal ministry had shifted from adults to infants. Fewer adults presented themselves for Christian initiation; at the same time, the offspring of Christians were being welcomed in increasing numbers. When infant baptism became the norm, mystagogy was no longer appropriate or useful.”

This evolution neglected the role of mystagogical catechesis which gradually shifted the focus from adult to children’s catechesis.

For centuries, the catechumenate of the patristic age remained in the historic memory of the Church. However, the ancient rites of initiation contained the seeds for the blossoming of a new and vibrant Church hundreds of years later, through the inauguration of the Second Vatican Council in the 1960’s.

The first document promulgated by the Council, the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, *(Sacrosanctum Concilium)*, set in motion a broad array of changes in liturgy. Two are of major importance for this project: 1) *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 14, “That all the faithful should be led to

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25 Kathleen Hughes, 12–13.

take that full, conscious, and active part in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of liturgy, and to which the Christian people, ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people’ (Pet. 2:9, 4-5) have a right and to which they are bound by reason of their Baptism;” 2) Sacrosanctum Concilium 64, “The Catechumenate for adults, divided into several steps, is to be restored and brought into use at the discretion of the local Ordinary.” The implementation of the catechumenate is carried out through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (hereafter RCIA) which was approved by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1986 and confirmed by the Apostolic See in 1988. 27 It replaced the provisional text approved in 1974 and contains the mandatory text.

Elements of Mystagogy

Rather than define mystagogy, RCIA 244 describes the purpose of mystagogy and its essential activities or elements: “This 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 works of charity.” Another way to describe mystagogy is through the four essential elements emphasized in the document: community, catechesis, liturgy, and mission. Catherine Dooley points out that “This contemporary understanding of mystagogy recognizes that all experience is capable of manifesting God; the purpose of mystagogy is to identify and appropriate God’s loving presence

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which already exists in the lives of the community and the neophytes." The structure for each of the periods, stages, and corresponding rites in the process of initiation for adults is contained in the document:

Thus there are four continuous periods: the precatechumenate, the period for hearing the first preaching of the Gospel (nos. 36-40); the period of the catechumenate, set aside for a thorough catechesis and for the rites belonging to this period (nos. 75-117); the period of purification and enlightenment (Lenten preparation), designed for a more intense preparation which is assisted by the celebration of the scrutinies and presentations (nos. 138-205); and the period of postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy, marked by the new experience of sacraments and community (nos. 244-251).

Rather than utilizing Easter week for mystagogy, the restored rite extends this period throughout the Easter season and encourages that there be a celebration to close the period of mystagogy near Pentecost Sunday. It recommends that the neophytes gather on the first anniversary of their baptism to renew their commitment. If possible, the Bishop should meet the newly baptized at least once during the year if he was not able to preside at the sacraments of their initiation.

The four essential elements cited in the RCIA: community, liturgy, catechesis, and mission serve as the pillars for the formation and perdurance of Catholic identity for neophytes as well as for the on-going growth of Catholic Christians in every generation. Each is equally important and necessary as they converge and provide an integrated experience of the Christian life. They demonstrate that mystagogy is a lifelong process of conversion.

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29 RCIA, no. 7.

30 For more information on these recommendations, see RCIA, nos. 248–251.
The *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium)* sets forth the church’s new understanding of itself as a Christian community within God’s plan for humanity who

willed to make women and men holy and to save them, not as individuals without any bond between them, but rather to make them into a people who might acknowledge him and serve him in holiness . . . Christ instituted this new covenant, the new covenant in his blood . . . ; he called a people together made up of Jews and Gentiles which would be one, not according to the flesh, but in the Spirit, and it would be the new people of God.

In the contemporary church, mystagogy happens through the interaction between the neophytes and the local parish community. RCIA 246 points out that “Through it the neophytes, with the help of their godparents, should experience a full and joyful welcome into the community and enter into closer ties with the other faithful. The faithful, in turn, should derive from it a renewal of inspiration and of outlook.” This is the work of a lifetime that finds variations in pastoral practice. In addition, the *National Statutes for the Catechumenate* in RCIA recommend a more extended period of mystagogy: “until the anniversary of Christian initiation, with at least monthly assemblies of the neophytes for their deeper Christian formation and incorporation into the full life of the Christian community.”

Mystagogy can properly be called a life-long apprenticeship in Christian living that begins with the sacraments of initiation. The community models the values and traditions that create a sense of identity and belonging as well as nurtures the continuing growth in faith of the

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31 *National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, RCIA, no. 24.
individual. It holds “the myths, symbols, and stories that serve as resources for meaning making, and . . . as the context for disciplines and practices that make it possible for us to see rightly” and persevere in the Christian vocation.

One of the identifying characteristics of a community is its rituals, or liturgy, a primary activity that forms and sustains the Christian community. 33 Sacrosanctum Concilium 10 emphasizes that “The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the church is directed; it is also the source from which all its power flows. For the goal of apostolic endeavor is that all who are made children of God by faith and Baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of his church, to take part in the sacrifice and to eat the Lord’s supper.” During the brief moments in which individuals are participating in liturgical celebrations, the Spirit is praying in one voice rather than in many voices; autonomous individuals are formed into a people at prayer united through the symbols, words, and gestures of the rite.

The restoration of the catechumenate is not only reviving the call to community in parishes but has had a strong impact on the church’s re-discovery of the communal nature of the sacraments. Rather than sacraments being solely ritual moments in the life of individuals, they are first and foremost, celebrations of the church, the community of faith. The religious


33 John H. Westerhoff, III, in Will Our Children Have Faith? Revised ed. (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2000), 140 attests that no other aspect is as formative of community as participation in its rituals.
experience of individuals is nurtured particularly within the parish community preceded by the proper catechesis and determination of the person’s readiness for the sacraments.\textsuperscript{34}

Catholics continue to identify themselves through their sacramental vision of reality or the sacramental principle that was mentioned earlier in this paper. In the Church’s seven sacraments, pivotal experiences of initiation, healing and service are symbolized by such ordinary elements as water, bread, oil and light; with words and gestures that make forgiveness and marital love sacred. They provide glimpses of the much greater power of the Holy Spirit active in the universe and celebrated in the Christian community.\textsuperscript{35} The poetic expressions of this belief resonate in word and song through the Psalms and liturgical music, fruit of the Catholic sacramental imagination. Kevin Irwin acknowledges that “A chief characteristic that undergirds the practice and understanding of worship is its reverence for and use of creation.”\textsuperscript{36}

This recognition adds a new dimension which makes the entire sacramental life of the community prime matter for mystagogy.\textsuperscript{37} Since “The sacraments create the texture of ordinary experience and give to the days, the seasons, the phases of each life order and meaning . . . The sacraments continue the miracle of the Incarnation on a daily basis. God continues to enter the

\textsuperscript{34} For Kathleen Hughes this is one of the most important contributions that the restored rite brings to the contemporary church. See her book, \textit{Saying Amen: A Mystagogy of Sacrament}, 12.


\textsuperscript{37} For affirmation of this point, see Kathleen Hughes, \textit{Saying Amen: A Mystagogy of Sacrament}, 14.
world in concrete ways.” Consequently, mystagogy rightly should accompany the celebration of all of the sacraments, not only the sacraments of initiation.

Because well-celebrated rites are the foundation for effective mystagogy, neophytes deserve to experience the beauty and dignity of the Church’s liturgical life at its best. RCIA 245 notes how their perception of faith, of the Church, and of the world is changed when their mind is renewed through God’s word and their heart is inflamed with the Holy Spirit. Mark Searle describes this continuing process poetically: “In the liturgy we stand before God and to do so is to stand before Mystery, to stand on the edge of an abyss, on the edge of language, on the edge of knowing. To pray is to hurl word into the vast infinity of the great silent mystery of God.”

However, to celebrate the sacraments in a way that allows the symbols to speak, engages people’s imagination, touches their hearts, moves them to deeper experience of Christ, and engages them in his mission poses a tremendous challenge for the Church and its ministers. Sacrosanctum Concilium 10 offers encouragement and hope of the power of God’s grace and in the truth that “The renewal in the Eucharist of the covenant between them and the Lord draws the faithful and sets them aflame with Christ’s compelling love.” It is a love that purifies the motives of believers as well as inspires them to remain united to Christ.

Today, as well as in the early church, catechesis is intrinsically wedded to liturgy. The mystagogical homilies of the patristic fathers not only led neophytes into a deeper understanding

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38 John Pfordresher, Jesus and the Emergence of the Catholic Imagination: An Illustrated Journey (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2008), 34.

and appreciation of the awesome mystery of God in the liturgical celebration but led them to adopting a sacramental vision of life where they could also recognize the presence of God in the ordinary. “The ancient catechumenate provides a pattern for liturgical catechesis. It is a unified process of formation that takes place in stages: pre-baptismal catechesis; participation and celebration of the rites; and a post-baptismal reflection that leads to action.”\textsuperscript{40} This catechetical process touches the heart, enlightens the mind and moves the will to make decisions based on Christian values. In other words, it brings about a profound conversion to discipleship which enables “the disciple to unite himself with everything with which Jesus Christ himself was profoundly united: with God his Father, who sent him into the world, and with the Holy Spirit who impelled his mission, with the Church, his body, for which he gave himself up, with mankind and with his brothers whose lot he wished to share.”\textsuperscript{41}

Catechesis in the process of Christian initiation, central during the mystagogy period, adds clarity to the new lens of faith the newly baptized have acquired through which they now see themselves. It also expands their imagination into emulating a new world view through which Catholics experience the world, make decisions and relate to one another. This world view is that of Jesus Christ whom they have said “yes” to and whose vision they discover continually as they live into this decision. It is a world view composed of seeming contradictions where old categories no longer apply, where there are no strangers, but only brothers and sisters, where


collaboration replaces competition, where to be first one must become last, where the beatitudes no longer seem incompatible with being human and with being Christian.

RCIA 244 revives another characteristic of mystagogy: that this period is not restricted to the newly baptized but is intended as communal reflection and catechesis for all baptized Catholics who form the body of Christ and are in an on-going process of conversion. The community witnesses the initiation of new Catholics into the church which provides the opportunity for all of the baptized to grow in the understanding and celebration of what they believe. This opportunity restores the practice in the early church exemplified by John Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia.

As the Christian community becomes more secure and rooted in its identity, so it must recognize and respond to its mission in the world. It must look beyond its physical as well as spiritual boundaries and respond to the cries of the poor and neglected. Mission is the fourth element in mystagogy because it is the overflow of community, catechesis, and liturgy, and also the most difficult to practice. The Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity (hereafter AGD), sets forth the vocation to mission that identifies the church: "The church on earth is by its nature missionary since, according to the plan of the Father, it has its origin in the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit. This plan flows from ‘fountain-like love,’ the love of God the Father." The prayer, support, and example in the Christian community make it possible for neophytes and the already baptized to respond to the demands of the Gospel and make a commitment to Christ and his mission, to practice love of neighbor, even at the cost of self-renunciation. Through

\[42\] Flannery, Vatican Council II, Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity, (Ad Gentes Divinitus) (AGD), no. 2.
inconveniences, misunderstandings, and self-sacrifice, they discover that mission is not a temporary project that requires busy work for God, but rather the overflow of faith into compassionate action, the fruit of genuine conversion.

The inter-relationship between community and mission is stressed in RCIA 75: “Since the Church’s life is apostolic, catechumens should also learn how to work actively with others to spread the Gospel and build up the Church by the witness of their lives and by professing their faith.” In addition, although RCIA 244 describes mystagogy as a time for the neophytes to ‘do works of charity,’ and does not specifically mention working for justice, the neophyte’s transition in outlook and morals begins during the period of the catechumenate as catechumens come to know the Lord as a sign of contradiction in whose suffering they will also share as they thirst for greater incorporation into his paschal mystery. Gradually, they begin to understand the social implications of the gospel, the genuine fasting that the prophet Isaiah vividly describes as “setting free the oppressed . . . sharing your bread with the hungry . . . sheltering the oppressed and the homeless, clothing the naked . . . and not turning your back on your own” (Is 58: 6–7 [NAB]). Pope Benedict XVI affirms that the mystagogical process bears fruit in the person’s growing awareness of how the mysteries we celebrate in prayer and Eucharist find their truest expression in the self-giving love of the transformed heart. 43 The writer believes in the importance of integrating the four elements in mystagogy in Christian living so that believers will emulate the totality of what it means to be a Catholic Christian in the world today.

Resources available to pastoral ministers for implementing the RCIA, include institutes provided by the North American Forum on the Catechumenate (FORUM) and *Catechumenate: A Journal of Christian Initiation*, published by Liturgy Training Publications. Catechetical materials continue to be developed that provide a comprehensive integration of each period in the process of initiation.

**Implementation of Mystagogy**

In 1997, the Bishops of the United States undertook a national study to ascertain the successful areas in the implementation of the RCIA and those which need greater effort and development. Recognizing that many people from diverse ministries are responsible for initiating new members into the church, they chose an interdisciplinary and collaborative approach of five national committees: Evangelization, Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, Education, Liturgy, and Pastoral Practices. Five groups were surveyed in the study: diocesan RCIA coordinators, diocesan and parish leaders, individuals who were received into the Church through baptism or reception into full communion, those who withdrew from the RCIA process before baptism or full communion, and diocesan bishops.

The results of this study were published in 2000 in *Journey to the Fullness of Life: A Report on the Implementation of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults in the United States*. The study revealed the following: 1) It “. . . confirms what many have been experiencing in recent years; that the RCIA when celebrated as it is intended, has great potential to renew and
transform parish life in our country;”44 2) For some pastoral ministers and bishops mystagogy seems to be the weakest aspect of the RCIA; and 3) “Some parishes have one or two sessions or social gatherings with the neophytes after the Easter Vigil. Others report a period of one to three months of mystagogy. However, most do not have a period as envisioned by the rite either in length or in content.”45 There is a strong declaration in the report: “This period needs to be restored in practice and better utilized as a time of catechesis and of a deeper incorporation into the mysteries already celebrated as well as the life of the local parish.”46

Since the publication of the report, parishes and dioceses continue working diligently to integrate mystagogy within the total RCIA process, encouraging active participation of the parish community in the initiation of new Catholics into the church. Research of contemporary practices of postbaptismal mystagogy provides insight for implementing it more effectively.

In his book, Creating an Effective Mystagogy: A Handbook for Catechumenate Leaders, Dennis Chriszt analyzed the present practice of mystagogy by conducting a study of three parishes that implement the fifty-day period of mystagogy: St. Ambrose of Milan and St. Cyril of Jerusalem in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, and St. John Chrysostom in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Chriszt reports that he seldom encountered what the RCIA presumes, namely that parishes are Eucharistic and mystagogical communities “in which the mysteries are not only celebrated but also appreciated and meditated on, communities in which


46 Ibid.
the mysteries send people forth to continue the mission of Christ to establish the reign of God here on earth today.”

Unfortunately, he has found this to be the ideal that numerous parishes are still struggling to attain.

His study affirms that well celebrated rites are essential for effective mystagogy. He states that the whole process of initiation should be mystagogical, beginning with the very first rite. Chriszt also discovered that when RCIA teams made living the Christian life, not just receiving baptism, the goal of mystagogy, it was more effective. Neophytes understood that participating weekly in Sunday Eucharist is not enough for Catholic Christians. Their commitment also requires a deep faith in God, guiding their moral life and moving them to serve their brothers and sisters in need.

Interviews of neophytes revealed attitudinal, relational, and behavioral changes. They described how their new understanding of God and Church affected how they related to God, church, and other people beginning with their families. Some shared the need to make changes in their careers and lifestyles which could have long term implications. They accentuated the important roles of the community, catechists, and sponsors in the process and appreciated the authenticity and transparency of the catechists and sponsors who shared their personal stories with them. They formed a personal relationship with the ordained ministers who journeyed with them in the process and who also presided and preached at Sunday liturgy which had a long-term effect in their lives.

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Chriszt concludes that the search for an effective mystagogy is a never-ending process: “It is the search itself, the search for the living God that is mystagogy.” The writer believes that as more parishes and parish ministers are convinced of this, they will discover the potential in mystagogy for evangelizing all of the adults in their parish.

Conclusion

The vision and process for initiating new members into the church introduced by the patristic fathers: Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose of Milan, John Chrysostom, and Theodore of Mopsuestia bears fruit in the Post Vatican II church through the RCIA. The implementation of mystagogy with its four essential elements: community, liturgy, catechesis, and mission is both a blessing and a challenge for pastoral ministers. However, research in its contemporary pastoral practice confirms how the integration of mystagogy’s essential characteristics and elements provide an effective process that enables neophytes to deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ through personal prayer and the prayer of the Christian community, to continue learning about the Catholic faith and developing a Christian lifestyle, and to contribute their gifts and talents in promoting the reign of God in the Christian community and in society.

48 Chriszt, 162.

CHAPTER II

MYSTAGOGICAL CATECHESIS

WITHIN THE CHURCH’S TASK AND EFFORTS

IN ADULT FAITH FORMATION
Introduction

Although the Church welcomes many new Catholics into the Church every year through RCIA, infant baptism remains prevalent in most parishes. From this reality arises the necessity for continual formation in faith for all members in the Church throughout the life cycle. This chapter explores the Church’s vision of the Catholic adult and her task of on-going adult faith formation as stated in Church documents. It cites some contemporary theories of human development in adult life in relationship to faith development and growth. It proposes that the elements comprising mystagogy: community, liturgy, catechesis, and mission, within the context of significant life experiences, have the potential for enhancing the vision and planning for the on-going faith formation of adults in Catholic parishes.

Church’s Vision and Task of Adult Faith Formation

With the inauguration of the Second Vatican Council, the Church came to a new awareness of its identity. Lumen Gentium 1 describes the church as “a sacrament a sign and instrument, that is of communion with God and of the unity of the entire human race.” It stresses the dignity of the baptized in Lumen Gentium 31 as “. . . all the faithful, that is, who by Baptism are incorporated into Christ, are constituted the people of God, who have been made sharers in their own way in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ and play their part in carrying out the mission of the whole Christian people in the church and in the world.” Evangelization becomes the vocation of all the baptized, to improve society through their witness to Christ and
the Gospel. Cognizant of the challenges confronting the proclamation of the Gospel to the people in contemporary society, in his Apostolic Exhortation, *On Evangelization in the Modern World (Evangelli Nuntiandi)*, Paul VI reminds the universal church that “Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity”\(^1\) to which the church must remain faithful.

This challenge is directed to every ministry and within every level of the Church’s life and can only be achieved by adults who continue to mature in their faith and understanding of their mission in the world\(^2\) by living, working and influencing various sectors in society. *The General Catechetical Directory* (hereafter GCD), emphasizes: “Catechesis for adults, since it deals with persons who are capable of adherence that is fully responsible, must be considered the chief form of *catechesis*. All other forms, which are indeed always necessary, are in some way oriented to it.”\(^3\)

In 1990, the International Council for Catechesis promulgated the document *Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community: Some Principles and Guidelines* (hereafter ACCC), fruit of its sixth plenary session in 1988. The document affirms several significant points that can guide catechesis with adults: 1) The church doesn’t need to catechize adults in exchange for a service they can render, but to bring the seeds of faith to maturity as they grow in age and responsibility; 2) Systematic and continual formation of the adults is the church’s central

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2. Jane Regan attests to the necessity of on-going adult faith formation to equip parish communities for evangelization. See p. 19–20 for her explanation.

catechetical task and essential for the existence of a fully Christian community; and 3) As both receiver and agent of the gospel, the Catholic adult many times becomes the only one who can demonstrate the possibility for change that comes from liberation through Jesus Christ. The GDC 173 states: “The faith of adults, therefore, must be continually enlightened, developed and protected, so that it may acquire that Christian wisdom which gives sense, unity, and hope to the many experiences of personal, social, and spiritual life.”

Jane Regan affirms that the goal of adult faith formation “is not simply enhancing membership or helping adults attain more knowledge about the faith; the goal is rooted in adults’ membership in an evangelizing community that understands itself to be engaged in the proclamation of the Good News and the transformation of persons and social structures to reflect more clearly God’s reign.”4 Making this goal a priority in the Church’s life and ministry presents challenges as well as opportunities.

Therefore in 2000, the bishops of the United States, as master catechists in their dioceses, issued Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us: A Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States, renewing their commitment to adult faith formation:

We are convinced that the energy and resources we devote to adult faith formation will strengthen and invigorate all the charisms that adults receive and the activities they undertake in the Church and in society, to serve the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the people of today. Every Church ministry will be energized through a dynamic ministry of adult catechesis. 5

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4 Regan, 80.

The bishops also realize that making adult faith formation a priority implies changes in the focus and structures that comprise parish life. They understand that in a real way, this requires a paradigm shift from placing the highest priority on faith formation of children and youth to investing a significant amount of financial and human resources to making adult faith formation more accessible, appealing, and effective for all adult Catholics. Consequently, their pastoral plan is intended to assist parishes and dioceses in supporting and fulfilling their vision of a more adult-centered model of church.

The pastoral plan is divided into four sections: 1) identifies concrete challenges and opportunities for the Church in a world of technology; 2) describes the qualities of a maturing faith; 3) presents goals, principles, content areas, and approaches for adult catechesis; 4) situates all of these within the context of the parish with diocesan support. The three major goals for adult faith formation: “invite and enable ongoing conversion to Jesus in holiness of life, promote and support active membership in the Christian community, and call and prepare adults to act as disciples in mission to the world” correspond to the purpose and elements in mystagogy: community, liturgy, catechesis, and mission. The pastoral plan presents strategies for systematic catechesis in the six dimensions for growth in faith set forth in the GDC 87: “The maturation of the Christian life requires that it be cultivated in all its dimensions: knowledge of the faith, liturgical life, moral formation, prayer, belonging to community, and missionary spirit. When catechesis omits one of these elements, the Christian faith does not attain full development.”

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6 Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us: A Pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States, nos. 68, 70, 72.
Thus, to facilitate adult faith formation requires methods and approaches appropriate to the learning needs of adults for integrating life experience with Scripture and Tradition that leads to a maturing faith. The National Conference for Catechetical Leadership outlines a wide array of opportunities for adult faith formation: “parish renewal processes, ministry to inactive Catholics, small Christian communities, faith sharing and study groups, speakers and community-based education, film festivals and other forms of technology, travel, service projects, cultural celebrations, and popular religious devotions.”7 Noted catechist and writer, Bill Huebsch, demonstrates how Whole Community Catechesis integrates the elements of the catechumenate into the rest of parish life utilizing scriptural, spiritual, and liturgical experiences guided by catechists who are engaged in their own on-going formation.8

Human and Faith Development in Adult Life

Research in psychological development in adult life and theories of how adults learn are elucidating pastoral planning for ongoing growth in adult faith. In the 1970’s, noted researcher in adult education and human resource development, Malcolm S. Knowles, introduced the term andragogy displaying the differences between how adults learn to how children learn. He defines andragogy as “any intentional and professionally guided activity that aims at a change in adult


8 For a list of suggestions for adult faith formation, see Bill Huebsch, Dreams and Visions: Pastoral Planning for Lifelong Faith Formation (New London, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2007), 12.
He points out that students in conventional education are required to comply with a curriculum established by educators, whereas in adult education, the opposite happens, the needs and interests of adults become the framework for the curriculum. Unlike children and youth, adults have a vast reservoir of life experience that serves as their greatest resource for acquiring new knowledge and skills. In a ministerial context, “Those who work with adults in parishes often walk with them as they struggle to find answers to life’s questions within social, economic, and religious structures that surround them. They need to be encouraged to explore the ups and downs of life’s journey through the eyes of faith.”

When speaking about the development of religious faith in adult life, James W. Fowler describes it as a dynamic of God calling human beings into intimate relationship with him and partnering with Him in the great work of establishing his kingship of love and justice in the world. He calls this process the Christian understanding of the human vocation which is an ongoing process. Transformation into this vocation entails development and gradual conversion through the human and faith stages of adulthood. Fowler describes this on-going process as one “through which people (or a group) gradually bring the lived story of their lives into congruence with the core story of the Christian faith.”

Peter Feldmeier contributes his research on spiritual growth through the life cycle and


affirms Fowler’s work on adult human and faith development. Feldmeier contends that there are four stages in the adult life cycle: early young adulthood, ages 18-22; young adulthood, ages 22-40; middle adulthood, ages 40-65; and older adulthood, ages 65 and beyond. He identifies human and spiritual characteristics of growth in each stage.\(^\text{12}\) This paper addresses the latter three stages. For example, young adults strive to form and pursue a dream, “a projected vision of the self into the future that can guide, nerve, and sustain a young man or woman in moving into the structures of today’s adult living.”\(^\text{13}\) Yet, when they are supported by the Christian community they begin to understand the role of grace in their efforts to internalize and practice faith while working towards success and making their place in the world, forming intimate relationships and commitments. The community has the task of inviting young adults to a counter-cultural stance that calls them to develop their gifts and talents in careers that will bring them the greatest satisfaction not just the greatest income and to contribute some of their energy for service to others rather than focusing solely on their own autonomy and self-groundedness.

While a measure of success may be achieved in middle adulthood, coming to terms with disillusionments and disappointments requires middle adults to make adjustments in their dream and to prioritize values while deepening the spiritual foundations of their lives. Fowler states: “Having found the limits of self-groundedness as the basis for our lives, strangely we are open in new ways to falling in love with the true ground of our Being.”\(^\text{14}\) Middle adults are called to let


\(^{13}\) *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian: Adult Development & Christian Faith*, 117.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 120.
go of wanting to control their lives and let God take over, to grow in self-giving love and freedom. Peter Feldmeier concurs, “Spiritual growth in midlife implies that one confront the fact that part of one’s religious piety is laced with ego . . . to investigate one’s heart and mind more fully. This investigation taken with the psychological need to integrate our unconscious selves, allows Christians to become more naturally loving.”

An integrated midlife spirituality exudes humility, compassion, simplicity, intuition, imagination and creativity, permeated with love. Prayer changes from thinking about God, to listening to God, to being in God.

Religious faith enables older adults to rejoice in their accomplishments, make peace with their past, accept their physical limits while embracing new energy to initiate new projects and become more open to the grandeur of God in the world, to live with dignity, courage, gratitude, and joy becoming more inclusive of others and surrendering more and more to God’s desire for them. “They witness to a new grace and poise in the context of a failing body; they offer hope and openness to life in the face of death; and they express a harmonious spirit in the midst of loss and pain. Above all, they witness to love and wisdom, fruits of a long life in the Spirit.”

Both of these writers affirm that the human person has the capacity to change, to be open to conversion and transformation in response to encountering the living God. In other words, one’s personal dream is ultimately realized by surrendering and living within God’s all-encompassing dream in Christian community. There are no images more powerful than those found in Scripture to describe the end result of this dynamic process: The Christian “takes on the

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16 For a description of these virtues, see Feldmeier, 204–206.

17 Feldmeier, 229–230.
mind of Christ (Phil 2:5); one becomes the New Man (Eph. 4:24), one who is both one’s truest self and yet paradoxically no longer locates a self to advance - it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me (Gal 2:20). In a word, we become Christified.”18 This is the hope and goal of all adult faith formation programs, processes and opportunities in the Church.

In light of his research, Feldmeier asserts that holiness is much more than just becoming integrated human beings. Nonetheless, he concludes that familiarity with models of human growth contributes to the discovery of appropriate faith formation opportunities and processes for adults because “it raises, clarifies, and addresses profound and important questions regarding holiness, wholeness and the process of spiritual development, and it enables one better to minister to others, to be present to others where they are and offer care that is appropriate.”19 Feldmeier’s insights affirm the work of pastoral ministers who work with adults.

**Mystagogy in On-going Adult Faith Formation**

As mentioned earlier, the RCIA 244 states that mystagogy during the Easter season assists all the baptized, neophytes as well as the rest of the Christian community, in deepening their understanding and commitment to Christ and Christian living. Therefore, mystagogy is also appropriate after each of the sacraments, not only the sacraments of initiation. In addition, the National Directory for Catechesis 117, proposes an even broader understanding and application of mystagogy. It “represents the Christian’s lifelong education and formation in the faith. By analogy, it signifies the continuous character of catechesis in the life of the Christian. Conversion

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18 Feldmeier, 230.

19 Ibid., 251.
to Christ is a lifelong process that should be accompanied at every stage by a vital catechesis that leads Christians on their journey towards holiness.”

Therefore, mystagogy can properly be described as a catechetical method that leads adults to seek opportunities for knowing and understanding what Catholics believe, celebrate, and witness, becoming lifelong learners in the faith. It is this broader understanding of mystagogy that the writer chooses to explore.

Catholic Christians spend a lifetime trying to understand what happened in baptism and what happens each time we gather to share in Eucharist, where all of our experiences are celebrated and find meaning. Diana Macalintal verifies: “All of us who are baptized, whether last year or many years ago, are called to constantly reflect on our experience of God, discern its meaning, renew our commitment to our baptismal promises, and commit ourselves to living those promises in the ordinary events of our daily life.”20 Initiation into the Christian community is also initiation into mystery which can never be fully understood nor completely described in words.

Mysteries are encounters with the Holy, and what we seek to understand is what to do after and as a result of the encounter. For example, the decades in the rosary are called mysteries precisely because they encompass the wide array of the encounters with mystery in the life of Jesus and Mary and how Christians are drawn into these mysteries in their own life as they alternately recite and listen to the prayers in a rhythmic style. Popular devotions such as the Way of the Cross enable the human person to imagine, feel, and reflect on the paschal mystery by

20 Diana Macalintal, “Christian Initiation of Adults: Mystagogy,” 1, [http://www.Diana@TeamRCIA.com](http://www.Diana@TeamRCIA.com), (accessed August 8, 2011).
walking, stopping, praying, pondering Christ’s journey to Calvary as a journey toward life through suffering and death. The prayers, pauses, gestures, visible images, and songs enable us to be immersed in the questions about human suffering as a believing community, to participate in the hope experienced through the paschal mystery of Christ, and to lighten the cross of others on life’s journey. Mystagogical catechesis seeks to bring to light the significance of this and other encounters, “not so much by logical exposition as by poetic juxtaposition of symbols,”21 the language of faith celebrated in liturgy.

After children and youth have received each of the sacraments of initiation, mystagogy assists parents and sponsors as well as other members of the Christian community to grasp the personal meaning of walking in newness of life with Christ. Mystagogy for the sacraments of healing testifies to the faith of the person who is ill as well as to the community’s belief in the healing power of Christ. Pondering the words, symbols, and ritual acts in the sacraments at the service of communion, Holy Orders and Matrimony, strengthens the commitment of those with a particular mission in the Church in the midst of conflicting attractions and values in society.

Catherine Dooley asserts that “Life is a continuous process and the sacraments are privileged moments within that process. Sacraments are not restricted to the moment of the celebration but include all the efforts toward conversion that take place before and after the liturgy as well as the actual celebration.”22 These moments include the Eucharistic experiences of joy, communion, and unity during the birth of a child, wedding anniversaries, birthdays,

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graduations, and job promotions. They encompass the experiences of the cross and suffering after the loss of a child, a spouse, a parent, a job, or one’s home and treasured possessions after a natural disaster. Moments of healing such as forgiveness and reconciliation among family members after years of separation, recovering from a life-threatening illness or an accident are all occasions for mystagogical catechesis.

**Method and Application of Mystagogical Catechesis**

Mystagogical catechesis begins with such experiences, significant moments as those described previously, experiences that are worth remembering and pondering because the persons that have experienced them do not fully understand their impact and meaning. There is a mystery about them that perhaps has not yet been identified as an encounter with the living God and elicits deeper reflection for integration into the fabric of Christian living.

The analogy of the activity found in a whirlpool serves to describe the process of awareness and conversion experienced during mystagogical catechesis through four successive and deepening movements. First, as in the whirlpool, the experience of mystery is at the outer circle and the person must *return to the experience* through the senses, memory, imagination, symbols to address the question, What did I experience? The second circle encompasses the search for understanding, to *reflect on its meaning* in terms of the personal, initial level of meaning for the person within his/her relationships considering perspectives, attitudes, challenges and affirmations.
Third, a deeper circle emerges inviting the person to ask again, What does it mean? to recognize and relish the mystery in light of the Christian Story and Tradition. Herein lies the opportunity for making the connections, for shedding light between life and the words of Scripture, for delving into the deeper meanings of the symbolic/sacramental experiences of faith and witness of the Church throughout the ages in light of the present reality of the person, for discovering where God, who is mystery touches the human experience. Darkness is also present in this inner swirl when human persons come face to face with their prior personal sins, selfishness and hard-heartedness, with the idols that attract them interiorly as well as in the world. Yet by plunging the depths of our experience, the moral demands of the Gospel become clearer and the experience of Christ’s love and his commandment to love are inescapable, where the movement of the Spirit makes conversion possible.

Unfortunately, the whirlpool analogy falls short when it comes to the fourth movement. In the whirlpool, the deeper the swirl, the stronger the current pulls everything in its path downward. In mystagogy, the fourth movement is the result of coming to a deeper understanding of the meaning of the experience. Rather than engulfing the person in a dangerous downward swirl, the opposite happens. Once a person has understood the meaning of the experience of mystery, of the power of a loving God who reaches into our murkiness as well as into our giftedness enlightening our journey of faith, he/she must respond to the mystery.

A change is required for answering the third question, What am I going to do about it? The person is thrust upward and outward from the depths of the whirlpool back to the top, into the light where the rest of life happens, renewed in faith and strength with the desire and capacity
to embrace the mission of Jesus in service to others through participation in the life and prayer of the Christian community, promoting charity and justice. Exteriorly, the surface may look the same but these are moments of conversion from seeing with human eyes to seeing with the eyes of faith and from loving with a divided heart to loving with a magnanimous heart, large enough for all whom we encounter.

Undoubtedly, the process of conversion is on-going and requires many moments of turning from selfishness to selflessness. Mystagogy becomes an instrument for conversion in adult life enabling people to move beyond the sensory level of human experience to a depth dimension where interpretation reveals its underlying meaning. As adults, we engage in two dynamics: “When we look forward, we can anticipate and hope, when we look back, we can appreciate and learn. Looking both ways is essential for creative and human living.”23 Believers deepen their understanding of what it means to live by faith in Jesus Christ. The religious dimension of the secondary level of human experience is a particular way of viewing these depth experiences that frees one to seeing within these moments the mystery we call God. There is the recognition of an invitation to a new relationship with the Holy, verified by the community’s experience and tradition.

Mystagogy creates spiritual space to discover the presence of God in our midst, to plunge the depths of grace, to breathe in new strength, joy, and faith from the encounters with mystery. “When we move from the sensory to the secondary level of human experience when we name beauty, truth, hope, love - we discover that the depth and immensity of the experience far exceed

any words or phrases we can use. Depth experiences bring us to the limits of human language. We use rich and multi-faceted symbols to express, however inadequately, the depth experience.”

Although this process enables adults to come to greater maturity in faith, it entails risk as the Christian Tradition dialogues with contemporary culture. In western culture, “It is much easier and safer to give people dogmas about God than to guide them to encounter the divine. It is easier and safer to give them information than to prepare them for transformation.” Mystagogy invites people into this type of deep reflection and conversation which also challenges them because “When people are content with the way things are and are not experiencing cognitive dissonance, there is not likely to be much desire to change. It is when one’s way of knowing or acting is challenged that there is energy to invest in new understandings and ways of acting.” The writer agrees with Fowler that it is especially the experiences of dissonance that need to be reflected upon in community:

Religious faith must enable us to face tragedy and finitude in the devastating and bewildering particular forms they come to us without giving in to despair or morbidity. Religious faith must name and face that deep-going tendency in us to make ourselves and the extensions of ourselves central in the world. From sin, self-absorption and all the life strategies and structures arising from them religious faith must provide liberation and redemption.

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24 Morris, 25.


Mystagogical catechesis addresses the needs that Fowler describes. It is a process similar to what Thomas Groome calls shared Christian praxis that enables adults not only to identify and share their experiences but to “reflect upon and learn the wisdom of Christian Story and Vision . . . it invites people to integrate the Faith into their own lives, to personally appropriate it, and choose to live it as ‘faith alive’ in the world.”²⁸ This carries a responsibility and “demands that we know what our experience is, that we are in touch with our own inner world and attentive to what we are doing when we gather to pray.”²⁹ Mystagogy fosters the skill and art of introspection, inviting people to pause, ponder, and then proclaim their faith in Jesus Christ; to imagine creative solutions to social injustice and human suffering, marks of Christian disciples in mission.

In light of the above, parishes need catechists who are mystagogues. These adults are comfortable with mystery and able to help other adults develop the art of reflection on their experiences without wanting to control what the Spirit wants to do in their lives, “to be willing to be carried where one might not wish to go, to allow God to take charge of the process.”³⁰ They help adults become aware of, identify, articulate, and share their experiences in order to find a deeper meaning of human life rooted in the mystery of God. As Lawrence Mick emphasizes, “Only the power of divine love can motivate a person to embrace the paradox that lies at the heart of the gospel. Only encounter with the all-loving God transforms a person to live one’s life


²⁹ Hughes, 16.

³⁰ Mick, 33.
totally for others. Only an experience that carries one beyond logic can prompt a person to adopt the foolishness of the gospel as a lifestyle.”

Mark Searle poses important questions in this regard. “Could a parish provide a place to tell stories with which people identify? Could our parishes become communities of memory and hope that would raise our sights and allow us to connect our aspirations for ourselves and for our families to the aspirations of the larger society?” In such communities, adults would be able to discern life-giving ways of quenching their thirst for deeper knowledge and understanding of the sacramentality of their Christian journey of faith as it intersects with the Christian Story and Tradition.

The writer believes that mystagogy enables adults to become aware of, to pay attention to, and identify the moments in daily life when they are in the presence of mystery, encountering the living God. Certain life-changing and pivotal experiences provide the context for mystagogy such as marriage and the birth of a child. The role of the Christian community, especially of family members, is critical for newlyweds and first-time parents to be open to conversion within the dramatic changes that these transitions demand.

In her wisdom, the Catholic Church requires that engaged couples participate in marriage preparation prior to entering into the Sacrament of Matrimony. Marriage brings many changes, a certain dissonance between individual lifestyles and the commitment of two people to become one in love. Marriage preparation programs that address the need for ministry to newlyweds such

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31 Mick, 33.

32 Searle, 77.
as UNITAS,\textsuperscript{33} also offers suggestions for a six-session Affirmation Period that can be developed on the parish level to enable newly married couples to grow in a Catholic vision and spirituality of marriage that will provide a greater permanency in their commitment, but it does not include mystagogical catechesis. The writer recommends that the Christian community assist the newlyweds on their new journey of living their marriage vows by engaging them in mystagogical catechesis for three beginning-marriage sessions based upon the four movements described earlier in this chapter.

Within six months after the wedding, pastoral ministers will meet with the couple, family members and friends who participated in the liturgy of matrimony. Prayerful refection on the experience of matrimony enables them to discover the meanings of the words, symbols, gestures, and prayers of the marriage rite within the celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy, assisting the couple in deepening their relationship with God as they deepen their relationship with one another. They have become apprentices in marriage. The \textit{Catechism of the Catholic Church} 1648 (hereafter CCC), acknowledges the challenges inherent in matrimony by stating:

\begin{quote}
It can be difficult, even impossible to bind oneself for life to another human being. This makes it all the more important to proclaim the Good News that God loves us with a definitive and irrevocable love, that married couples share in this love, that it supports and sustains them, and that by their own faithfulness they can be witnesses to God’s faithful life. Spouses who with God’s grace give this witness . . . deserve the gratitude and support of the ecclesial community.
\end{quote}

Mystagogical catechesis provides a safe and welcoming environment where the couple can find answers for their own faith questions and understand the continuing process of growing into marriage. Reflection on events, values, and images in Scripture and Christian Tradition such as

\textsuperscript{33} This program is available in paperback and in DVD: Joann Heaney-Hunter and Louis H. Primavera, \textit{UNITAS: Preparing for Sacramental Marriage} (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1998).
friendship, covenant, and long-lasting fidelity, strengthen the couple’s understanding of Eucharist and holiness through commitment to one another. The Christian community will become more aware and responsible for fostering healthy, holy Christian marriages.

Another life-transition and encounter with mystery for Christian couples is the miracle of life as they experience the birth of a child, especially their first child. It is one of those sacramental moments that happen prior to its celebration in liturgy. It celebrates God’s sharing of the power to create human life with human beings who collaborate with God in the great act of bringing another human person into the world. This child is a unique individual unlike any other person in the universe who brings great joy as well as dramatic changes in marriage. The couple’s preparation and making room in their lives for another person in their relationship, the vocation to parenthood, is another experience of joy as well as dissonance, ripe for mystagogical catechesis with family, friends, and members of the Christian community that will contribute to raising this child in faith.

In the Mexican tradition parents ritualize their awareness of the mystery of God through the symbolic gesture of stopping at the church on the way home from the hospital. Even before the infant is introduced to his/her crib at home he/she is introduced to holy water, the crucifix, the altar, the tabernacle, and other symbols of Christian faith. The parents give praise and thanks to God for the miracle, the gift that has been entrusted to them, asking for His blessing and assistance as they enter into this journey. This is a rich moment for Christian ritual, for representatives of the parish community to welcome the parents and child to their Catholic community.
Mystagogical catechesis at a feasible time for parents and family members utilizes the themes and images of creation, the dignity of the human person, the power to co-create found in Scripture. It introduces them to the new life in Christ which the child will experience in the Sacrament of Baptism in anticipation of the actual preparation and celebration of the Sacrament. The CCC 2233 recognizes that Christian parenting will not be easy by stating:

Parents have the first responsibility for the education of children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for education in the virtues. This requires an apprenticeship in self-denial, sound judgment, and self-mastery – the precondition of all true freedom.

The parents are encouraged to participate in the sacramental life of the Church, a source for their continued growth in faith which nurtures a Christian environment for their child. Their desire to give of themselves to each other and to their child is affirmed and stretched to include those outside their family as disciples of Jesus Christ.

A third occasion for mystagogical catechesis with adults arises from their experience of the homily at Sunday liturgy. It holds a prime place in our contemporary Church as it did for the patristic fathers who catechized the early Christians through their homilies. The Sunday homily may seem very ordinary in the life of Catholics who participate in Sunday Eucharist regularly, or even for those who participate occasionally on special feasts such as Christmas and Easter. Yet, like the other two events described previously, it is meant to call adults into a deeper relationship with Christ, greater participation in the Christian community, and a stronger commitment to His mission. It is an opportunity for Catholics to be grasped by the power of the Word of God which transforms human, natural hearts to hearts on fire with the love of God. The Scriptures have been
given to the Christian community, entrusted to them as the living word of God. They give new life to people of faith who ponder the stories and events that are re-lived in every culture, in every time and place.

In their document, *Fulfilled in Your Hearing: the Homily in the Sunday Assembly*, the bishops of the United States emphasize: “For the vast majority of Catholics the Sunday homily is the normal and frequently the formal way in which they hear the Word of God proclaimed. For these Catholics, the Sunday homily may well be the most decisive factor in determining the depth of their faith and strengthening the level of their commitment to the church.”

Many Catholics come together to reflect on the Sunday readings prior to Sunday, but how enriching it would be to reflect on the homily, on the meaning of Scripture for daily life, after people have worshipped in the assembly, savored the goodness of the living Christ in the word as well as in holy communion. As the document points out, “The homily is not so much on the Scriptures as from and through them.”

The bishops acknowledge that,

Like humans everywhere, the people who make up the liturgical assembly are people hungry, sometimes desperately so, for meaning in their lives. For a time they may find meaning in their jobs, their families and friends, their political or social causes. All these concerns, good and valid as they are, fall short of providing ultimate meaning. Without ultimate meaning, we are ultimately unsatisfied. If we are able to hear a word which gives our lives another level of meaning, which interprets them in relation to God, then our response is to turn to this source of meaning in an attitude of praise and thanksgiving.

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36 Ibid., 7.
The Scripture readings proclaimed during the Sundays after Easter, especially for Year A with the reflection in the homily, provide the context for deepening the understanding of what it means to be Christian for neophytes as well as for the rest of the faithful. In addition, the weeks during Ordinary Time in the liturgical year between Epiphany and Lent and from Pentecost to Advent are also very appropriate for mystagogical catechesis because this time “offers a chance to grasp our original festival, the Sunday, kept as such in the home and in the Church Community.”37 Actually, “It is the very ordinariness of these weeks that sustains us and allows the seasons to be so special when they come.”38 Even during ordinary time, people are laughing and crying, sharing and fearing, loving as well as hurting and forgiving one another. They are experiencing life with all its mountains and valleys, in ways where the roots of faith can grow deeper and stronger.

Especially during the summer months, parish activities enter a relaxed mode of ordinariness. On a week day, adults can be invited to gather in small groups with the homilists for mystagogical catechesis on the Sunday homily. More parishioners will have the opportunity to grow in knowing God and in being moved by the mystery of God through the proclaiming and breaking open of the Scriptures. Utilizing the four-movement process, they begin with prayer followed by reflection and sharing on questions about what they saw, imagined, heard, felt, during the homily; how they were challenged, comforted, enlightened. They will be invited to discover where the Christian Story in the Scripture readings sheds light on their life, their joys, sorrows, concerns, fears, hopes, and doubts.

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38 Ibid., 107.
Conversation revolves around questions such as: How has their image of God changed as they have encountered God in the proclamation of the Word? What is God asking of them now? What are implications in the Scripture for ethical living and mission? These questions invite the priests and deacons to provide further instruction on the Church’s tradition and practice of the Christian message in Scripture for enriching their Christian living. The session concludes with a phrase from one of the Scripture readings for the group to take home for deeper reflection. Different groups can be invited to participate in the scope of one year, affirming how “Catechesis offers the possibility for members of the faith community to gather in conversation with the potential of renewing and transforming the community’s self-understanding of what it means to be Church in a particular time and place. And catechesis includes the call to be about transforming the interactions and structures of society in light of Gospel convictions.”

Flowing from this reflection and conversation, the priest and deacons will gain insight for preparing the next Sunday’s homily. They will become more aware and attentive to recognize how “The kingdom breaks in on the liturgical assembly through the Word by means of the presence and action of the Spirit.” Concomitantly, the listeners will experience what Kevin Irwin points out:

Through the homily the preacher articulates aspects of salvation enacted in the Word proclaimed that day as these relate to the given liturgical and ecclesial context in which the Scriptures are heard. At times the ‘breaking open of the Word’ can include laying bare infidelities and weakness in faith. At other times it can include discovering new

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39 Regan, 16.
40 Irwin, 99.
ways of comprehending and experiencing the living God. The two-edged sword of the Word can both cut through well worn habits of vice and foster new habits of virtue.  

This encounter with God through listening to the word in the Sunday readings, interpreting its meaning in the homily, and capturing its power through mystagogical catechesis in small groups serve as another model for on-going adult faith formation in the parish that moves beyond Bible Study in preparation for the Sunday Eucharist. Instead, it is an experience of the community’s formation from and within Scripture which leads members to deeper conversion and transformation; “. . . as it affords the opportunity for learners to reflect on the source and reasons for belief, and as it provides a context for learners to make a connection between the tradition and their lives.”

The participants will develop more attentive listening to the Scriptures and the homily on subsequent Sundays and grow in their understanding of the relationship between the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Eucharist as they become more attentive to all of the liturgical words and actions. This is one example of active participation in the liturgy envisioned in Sacrosanctum Concilium which Hughes addresses: “Liturgical attention is of two kinds: attending to the liturgy as it unfolds and attending to the movements of our hearts before, during and after the celebration. Both kinds of attention are essential to what we have come to call active participation . . . the goal of liturgical reform.”

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41 Irwin, 99.
42 Regan, 16.
43 Hughes, 17.
Unfortunately, mystagogy is confronted by western culture. Hughes identifies three obstacles to paying attention in contemporary society, namely “noise, speed that fills up our time and calendar, and technological gadgets of communication that clutter instead of simplify our lives.” Nonetheless, the homily enhances the worship of God only if individuals in that community recognize there a word that responds to the implicit or explicit questions of their lives and develop the habit of listening deeply to the stirrings of the Spirit within and among them.

These three events in adult life contain the elements in mystagogy as experiences of the believing community through liturgy or within the sacramentality of creation, providing catechesis for deeper understanding and integration of the meanings of the experience that leads to mission. All of these experiences bring persons to the table, “to experience this divine mystery most fully in the Eucharist—that intimate act of eating and drinking together with those named after the one we love the most: Christ,” where all of human experience is made one in the experience of becoming the body of Christ.

Conclusion

The documents on the task and efforts in the church for formation of adults in faith coupled with research in how adults learn and grow in faith throughout their life cycle challenge pastoral ministers to create new models that invite adults to reflect on significant human

44 Kathleen Hughes addresses these obstacles in greater detail and how to counteract them in “Chapter Two: Paying Attention,” 17–32.

45 Macalintal, 1.
experiences in a way that brings them to a deeper level of faith and relationship with Christ and leads them to recognize the sacramental dimension of their ordinary lives. In response to this challenge, the writer developed a four-movement process in mystagogical catechesis as a viable method that enables adults to participate in and embrace the paschal mystery of Christ through their life experiences which fosters their maturity in faith.

In order to contextualize this process, she proposed three significant experiences in adult life conducive for mystagogical catechesis: matrimony, the birth of a child, and the Sunday homily. These serve as examples that elicit the creativity of pastoral ministers for utilizing mystagogical catechesis with other pivotal life experiences.
CHAPTER III

IMPLEMENTATION OF MYSTAGOGY TRAINING WORKSHOP

FOR PARISH MINISTERS
Introduction

The ultimate goal of this project is to provide a learning experience for parish ministers: RCIA teams, catechists of adults, and liturgical ministers that enable them to understand, value, and implement mystagogical catechesis by integrating its four essential elements in processes with neophytes as well as with the already baptized adults in their parishes. In this chapter the writer describes each step she took in reaching her goal. She designed and facilitated a six-hour training workshop on mystagogy for parish ministers in two Texas parishes. The workshop was interactive, divided into four parts: 1) Post-baptismal mystagogy: historical development, characteristics, essential elements and effective models; 2) faith formation and faith development of adults throughout their life cycle; 3) mystagogy as method and four-movement process for pivotal life experiences and models of mystagogical catechesis for on-going adult faith formation; and 4) selection of significant life experiences for application of mystagogical catechesis in participants’ parishes.

Overview of the Vision and Planning for the Workshop

Inspired by the wisdom of the mystagogues of the early Church and desiring to infuse their vision for postbaptismal mystagogy into its contemporary implementation initiated by Vatican II, the writer adapted their catechetical method to a four-movement process suitable within the context of the contemporary church. Although the mystagogues utilized typology in their homiletic catechetical method for interpreting the mysteries, catechists in the contemporary
church first invite neophytes to reflect on their experience utilizing all of their senses, imagination and memory; dialogue with one another about the personal and communal meaning of the experience; then move them to an understanding of the deeper meanings of their experience by relying not only on Scriptural exegesis but also on the church’s history, experience, and lived tradition.

Implications for Christian living are understood not by fleeing from the enticements of Satan in an evil world, but by its opposite, by living in the world as light because of God’s love for the world and all creation: “For God so loved the world that he sent his only Son so that whoever believes in Him would not perish but have eternal life” (Jn 3:16). Baptismal living through community, liturgy, and catechesis also requires commitment to the mission of Jesus, relieving human misery, and witnessing to the values of the Gospel that lead to transformation of its structures promoting the reign of God in our times.

The workshop demonstrates the process in mystagogical catechesis as it pertains not only to the postbaptismal period in Christian initiation but also to all sacraments. Furthermore, it brings people to a greater awareness of the mystery of God revealed within experiences that impact human life but are only more fully understood after reflecting upon and uncovering their spiritual dimension in light of Scripture and Christian Tradition. This broader understanding of mystagogy widens the doorway for creativity acknowledging that “mystagogy is a form of catechesis appropriate to all practicing believers”¹ and utilizing mystagogy as a life-long process that prepares adults for conversion which ultimately leads to transformation into Christ.

¹ Kathleen Hughes, 13.
While countless parishes offer diverse programs for adult faith formation, mystagogy as a catechetical process is not limited to any specific program but has the potential for enhancing how Catholics recognize, name, understand, and respond to God within the events that shape their lives, moments that make people stop and wonder about meaning in their lives. Adults can be invited into this process numerous times leading them to form a habit of cherishing God’s activity in their lives precisely from the “stuff” out of which faith deepens. In other words, mystagogy places the individuals in an environment wherein transformative learning can occur, namely where their prior assumptions, perceptions, and attitudes are placed under the light of the Christian story and Tradition that brings about conversion. The training workshop provides a tool for guiding parish ministers in their work with adults that is appropriate for many life experiences leading people to continuing growth in faith.

In order to test her vision, the writer facilitated the workshop in two parishes and also assisted the participants in planning and piloting mystagogical catechesis in specific ways determined by them. In selecting the two parishes for her workshop, the writer considered three significant criteria: 1) parishes presently not fully implementing postbaptismal mystagogy but desiring to do so; 2) the leadership and vision of the pastors and their openness to providing more opportunities for adult faith formation; and 3) two different geographic areas in Texas to gain diverse experiences and perspective in adult faith formation. St. James, a rural parish with two missions, within the archdiocese of San Antonio, and Our Lady of Grace in Lubbock, a metropolitan city in west Texas, met the criteria and the pastors welcomed the opportunity for their parish to participate in the project.
Parish Profiles

The Catholic Community of Gonzales and Waelder, Texas (hereafter group one), is composed of two rural communities. St. James is the mother parish with Sacred Heart Mission in Gonzales and St. Patrick mission in Waelder, eighteen miles away, serving a total of over twelve hundred families. There are five weekend masses. St. James serves mostly the Anglo and bi-lingual Mexican-American population with two English Masses. Sacred Heart serves mostly the Spanish-speaking immigrants with one Spanish Mass but also has one English Mass. St. Patrick’s has a bi-lingual Mass for its diverse population. The rectory, parish offices, and religious education building are at St. James. Sacred Heart and St. Patrick each have a parish hall. The children from Sacred Heart and St. James attend religious education classes at St. James. St. Patrick has its own catechetical program for elementary grades. Middle and high school students from all three communities attend religious education classes at St. James. St. James, Sacred Heart, and St. Patrick have a combined finance committee and liturgy committee but St. Patrick has its own parish council while St. James and Sacred Heart have a joint council.

In recent years, St. James and Sacred Heart have begun to collaborate more closely with each other and all three communities identify themselves as the Catholic Community of Gonzales and Waelder. They have an English and a Spanish RCIA group. The staff consists of the pastor, a full-time secretary and maintenance person, part-time director of religious education, three deacons, one of whom is bi-lingual but more Spanish dominant, a bookkeeper, and the writer who is presently serving as a part-time ministry resource person.
Our Lady of Grace parish in Lubbock is more metropolitan, the poorest economically, of the eight parishes in the city. It serves approximately eighteen hundred families, mostly Hispanic but has both English and Spanish masses with ministers who are predominantly Mexican-American and bilingual. Salaried staff includes the pastor, associate pastor, two women religious, the administrative assistant, and bookkeeper. The parish has four deacons, one deacon candidate, and many committed parish volunteers: three religious education coordinators, and two RCIA directors. There are four Sunday liturgies on the weekend; one in Spanish on Saturday and three in English on Sunday.

**Components of the Project**

The project consists of three phases. In phase one, two pre-workshops steps were taken to obtain data on the participants and the parishes through the questionnaire and interview methods. First, participants responded to a pre-workshop survey focusing on their understanding and familiarity with postbaptismal mystagogy and their learning needs. Soon after, the writer met with the pastor and a few parish leaders to gain background information on each of the parishes, to share results of the pre-workshop survey, and to solicit their help during the workshop and in the planning and implementation of the follow-up steps after the workshop.

Second, the writer facilitated the six-hour workshop for parish ministers in the two respective parishes which concluded with a written evaluation by participants. Third, two steps followed the workshop: 1) a meeting of the writer with core leaders in each parish to begin designing their first process for mystagogical catechesis; and 2) two post-workshop
questionnaires six weeks later, one to solicit participants’ additional insights/learnings and progress on the planning of the first session of mystagogical catechesis, and the other for leaders who would be responsible for coordinating the local implementation of mystagogy.

The writer communicated with participants throughout the process. First, the pastor sent an introductory letter to participants with a brief description of the project inviting them to participate and informing them that a pre-workshop survey would follow, which was sent with a second letter. The writer tested the suitability of the survey with one of the catechists in group one who would not be participating in the workshop and he had no difficulty in understanding and responding to the questions. Details on the workshop and reading material on mystagogy were included in the third letter. The fourth letter informed participants of the results of the leaders’ planning meeting and included a copy of the draft of the first mystagogical process for their parish which would be finalized and then sent to them at a later date. The fifth letter included the post-workshop questionnaire.

**Pre-Workshop Survey and Meeting**

In group one, eighteen letters and surveys were mailed and in group two, fifteen were sent electronically. Fifteen people in each group responded to the survey (see appendix A.1). The information they provided assisted the writer in preparing the workshop design. Group one consisted of the pastor and three deacons, five liturgical ministers, four catechists of adults, two RCIA directors and one DRE. Six people were from St. James, three from St. Patrick, and two from Sacred Heart. Group two included the pastor, two coordinators of Religious Education, and
eleven RCIA team members including two directors. All of the participants in both groups have experience in two or more ministries. Fourteen respondents in group one always participate in the Easter Vigil and three have served as sponsors in RCIA. In group two, eleven always participate in the Easter Vigil and twelve have served as sponsors. Of the thirty total respondents, twenty-seven were baptized as children and three were baptized as adults but not through RCIA: one in group one and two in group two.

Regarding their current understanding of mystagogy, one person gave no response in group one, whereas three people gave no response in group two. Among the responses in group one, eleven understood either the primary purpose of mystagogy or described some of its characteristics while one person responded with “vague” and another wrote “no understanding, this is the first time I’ve heard of it.” Responses in group two included more descriptions of mystagogy in terms of ministry and service rather than as on-going faith formation. One person responded with “very little” and another with “some.” A third person wrote: “Don’t really know but feel that it is serving God–by serving others–doing God’s work in spreading his word–helping others.” Responses from group one to question number six, “How well do you feel you understand mystagogy?” are as follows: two – ‘extremely well,’ five – ‘well,’ one – ‘somewhat,’ five – ‘little,’ one – ‘none’ and one person gave no response, which is almost half of the group with insufficient knowledge of mystagogy. The majority in group two, eleven people checked ‘somewhat’ for how well they understand mystagogy. These responses were consistent with their responses to items eight to fourteen in the multiple choice section of the survey.
The writer addressed the needs of the respondents with some basic information on mystagogy prior to the workshop to enhance their knowledge and preparation for the workshop. The preparatory material included the section on mystagogy in the RCIA document, numbers 244–248 and numbers 22–24 in the *National Statutes for the Catechumenate*.

In question seven, participants were asked to describe how neophytes participated in one of the elements of mystagogy: catechesis, community, liturgy, or mission during the formal mystagogy period. In group one, five chose catechesis. Four years ago, the neophytes asked for continuing adult faith formation so the RCIA directors created Sunday morning sessions for adults called CAFÉ (Catholic Adult Faith Education) for neophytes and all other adults where the group chooses the topics for discussion. Four respondents listed CAFÉ as the vehicle for the newly baptized to participate in catechesis for others as well as for themselves. These respondents described how neophytes participate in catechetical ministry as aides, RCIA team members, as well as in adult education opportunities such as retreats. Others are involved in liturgical ministry while some have little or no participation. They did not list specific ways under each element but rather responded by how the newly baptized were participating overall.

In group two, two people gave no response and some of the others listed specific ways such as attending Mass, participating in liturgical ministry, and outreach to the community. They commented on the growth they have seen and the desire of neophytes to have family members also participate in parish life as they are doing. These responses are an indication of the conversion that has taken place during the RCIA process; although not itemized in terms of the four elements listed in the survey.
Question fifteen asked the participants what they would like to learn about mystagogy during the workshop. Responses from participants in group one affirmed the writer’s conviction that parish leaders have a desire to understand mystagogy, its role in the continuing formation of neophytes, and to be able to implement it effectively as described in their own words: “a simpler explanation of mystagogy, the steps of progression in mystagogy, successful methods/models of mystagogy, and mystagogy for cradle Catholics.” In group two, three people did not respond to this question. The twelve that did respond also expressed a need to understand the meaning and history of mystagogy, how to implement it, and apply it to everyday life, and make conversion a continuous process for the newly baptized. Two people wrote, “everything,” and another person wrote, “as much as I will be able to.” These responses demonstrated an openness and willingness to increase their knowledge and encouraged the writer to carefully select material that would meet these expectations.

Prior to the workshop, the writer met with the pastor, the Religious Education director, and the RCIA director in group one and with the two RCIA coordinators and the Religious Education coordinator for middle school students in group two. She reiterated the goal of the doctor of ministry project, thanked them for their willingness to participate in the project, and distributed copies of the compiled results of the pre-workshop survey. She commented that some of the respondents seem to have a grasp of the purpose and meaning of mystagogy while others have none or a minimal understanding of it.

She asked them two questions: 1) “What is your vision of the parish?” and 2) “What are the structures that support your vision?” Among many responses, group one was most emphatic
about having one united parish rather than two; where everyone’s culture, gifts, and talents are respected and contribute to the community’s faith life. They would like to live in a parish where all are brothers and sisters who live the gospel and form children and youth in the Catholic faith.

A joint parish council and a liturgy and finance committee support this vision but the parish organizations and choirs are very independent with little or no collaboration among them. Leaders of organizations communicate primarily with the pastor. Calendar of events and use of facilities are on a first-come first-serve basis but there is no joint planning for the year which at time results in tension between organizations and ministries. Facilities are inadequate in both the parish and mission. However, a multi-purpose building for everyone’s use is in the planning stages with eighty percent support from parishioners. The leaders welcomed the opportunity to dialogue with one another regarding their vision and concerns for the life and growth of the parish, something they had not done before, and recognized the need to meet more often in order to truly develop a common vision for the parish.

Group two envisions greater financial and personnel investment of the parish in faith formation of youth. The parish is very committed to the senior adults through pastoral care as well as biblical study by the two religious women who serve only the small number of older Spanish-speaking adults. Now that a new Church building has been constructed they want to devote more attention to the families with children and youth. Organizations have open channels of communication among them. The parish is involved in social outreach to the incarcerated, women’s shelter, and projects for the poor. Space for parish activities is limited which curtails envisioning new possibilities.
The writer explained the purpose of the workshop to both groups and invited the leaders to assist her at the beginning of the workshop by role playing a staff meeting during Easter week, sharing their experience of the Easter Vigil as an introduction to mystagogy in their parish. They were very willing to do so and began rehearsing some of it. She also gave them a copy of the schedule for the workshop, describing each segment and explained their role in the follow-up steps in the project, beginning by meeting with her after the workshop to plan the first mystagogy session and then coordinating its implementation; followed by planning and coordinating the other two experiences agreed upon by the group. Both groups accepted this responsibility and expressed gratitude to the writer for offering them the opportunity to learn more about mystagogy in order to be of greater service to their parish.

**Mystagogy Workshop**

The six-hour training workshop was held in Gonzales in October 2011 and in Lubbock in November 2011. The writer developed handouts for each part of the workshop process to enhance learning and group participation and to serve as resources for them in the implementation of mystagogy in the future (see appendix A.2). She translated some of them into Spanish for participants who were Spanish dominant. Content for her input was taken from the first two chapters of this project. She arranged a display of some of her written resources for their review during the breaks and lunch time. Eleven people completed the workshop in group one: six from St. James, three from St. Patrick, and two from Sacred Heart. In group two, thirteen people completed the workshop. Unfortunately, the pastors in both groups were not able to stay
for the last part of the workshop. Although they expressed their full support, they missed the
discussion and consensus on opportunities for mystagogical catechesis that will be critical in its
effective implementation in their parishes. The participants will need to inform them of their role
in the follow-up process.

Each group was divided into three smaller groups to facilitate participation and
discussion. Beginning with a brief welcome and introduction to the workshop, the writer thanked
participants for responding to the pre-workshop survey and made general comments about the
results. She referred them to the handout of the Workshop Design which coincided to a great
extent with their learning expectations (see appendix A.2). The workshop was designed
according to the steps outlined in Understanding by Design by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe
which illustrates that “To understand is to make connections and bind together our knowledge
into something that makes sense of things, whereas without understanding we might see only
unclear, isolated facts. . . . To understand is to be able to wisely and effectively use – transfer –
what we know, in context; to apply knowledge and skill effectively, in realistic tasks and
settings.”

Participants volunteered for the procession and readings for the opening Easter prayer
which was followed by a role play of a parish staff meeting evaluating their experience of the
Easter Vigil to introduce postbaptismal mystagogy. The groups were asked to share what they
learned from observing the role play. Comments from both groups can be summarized as
follows: 1) Easter Vigil is always one of the highlights of our year; 2) We do a good job up to the

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2 Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, Understanding by Design, Expanded 2nd Ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ:
Easter Vigil but we fall short when it comes to mystagogy; 3) Some of the newly initiated become very visible in the parish and participate in ministry, but not everyone, especially those who were candidates preparing for Confirmation; and 4) We don’t have a good sense of what mystagogy should be. How can we do better? The writer assured them that these questions would be addressed during the workshop.

She gave them a brief explanation of the meaning of the term mystagogy and its historical development up to the present day (see appendix A.2). She stated that the bishops in the early Church asked the neophytes three questions: What did you experience? What does it mean? What are you going to do about it? They provided the answers through mystagogical homilies emphasizing the use of the senses and interpreting the levels of meaning in the symbolic elements and ritual actions of Christian initiation, leading to confronting the challenges in Christian living. Excerpts from St. Cyril of Jerusalem’s postbaptismal homilies illustrate their efficacy.

The facilitator introduced the four elements in mystagogy by inviting the participants to read article number 244 in their handout on mystagogy from the RCIA (see appendix A.2), then asked them to identify the key elements in mystagogy. As a person called out one of the four elements, she/he was given a hula hoop and asked to stand in front of the group with other members in the group. They gathered and helped to hold up the hula hoop. The process continued until all four of the elements were identified in their words: “being part of the community, participating in the Mass and sacraments, studying our Catholic faith, doing what God asks us to do by serving others.” She asked them to demonstrate how these elements are
inter-related in Christian life by interlocking the hula hoops where they converged at a certain point. This activity gave them a visible image of how each of these elements has a distinct role in Christian life, yet interlocks with the others to contribute to a continual growth in faith throughout our lives.

Gleaning from her research, the facilitator addressed the importance of each of the elements. She emphasized celebrating the rites well which involve the imagination and the senses and how liturgy celebrates and expresses the faith of the community and also forms the community in faith. She stressed the role of the community in forming and supporting the faith of adults, emphasizing that participation in the church’s sacramental and pastoral life is essential for Catholics. She pointed out that the sources for catechesis, Scripture and Tradition, lead people to a deeper understanding of the meaning of the rites in which they have participated, the starting point for mystagogy. She concluded with the goal of mystagogy: the witness of Christian living and service to others.

In group one, participants commented regarding their desire to become more conscious of how these elements and their inter-relationship are visible in their parish. In group two, discussion followed regarding how much ministerial responsibilities should be given to neophytes during their first year after initiation and how the parish needs to do more with and for neophytes during the first year after initiation.

Three models that incorporate the four elements in effective postbaptismal mystagogy were introduced by the facilitator (see appendix A.2); one was reviewed by each small group. Two are parish models: St. Michael parish in Livermore, California and St. Mark’s parish in San
Antonio, Texas. The writer calls the third model the liturgical year model which is a paraphrased outline of Ron Oakham’s article, “The Extended Mystagogy: Indictment or Wisdom?” in *Catechumenate: A Journal of Christian Initiation*. It presents one model for implementing a year-long mystagogy as recommended by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: “After the immediate mystagogy or postbaptismal catechesis during the Easter season, the program for neophytes should extend until the anniversary of Christian initiation, with at least monthly assemblies of the neophytes for their deeper Christian formation and incorporation into the full life of the Christian community.” However, rather than monthly sessions, Oakham proposes gathering neophytes for mystagogical reflection after they participate in the celebration of liturgical feasts ranging from the Birth of John the Baptist on June 14th to the Presentation of the Lord on February 2nd, a service project during Lent, concluding with the renewal of their baptismal promises at the Easter Vigil. This model allows neophytes to experience, enjoy, and learn more about the full scope of the church’s celebration of the paschal mystery and how to participate in the prayer life of the Christian community. It frees them to allow the paschal mystery to penetrate every aspect of their lives.

Each group reviewed one of the models and identified how it exemplifies the four elements in mystagogy. They appreciated contextualizing the process and discovered ways for enhancing mystagogy in their local parish. They realized that mystagogy has to be an integral part of the total process of initiation in order for neophytes to begin living the Christian life and

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recognized that neophytes are apprentices in Christian living who still need the support and modeling of the Christian community.

The facilitator asked: “What is mystagogy?” Responses included, “a process, an on-going process of conversion, a way to help people understand how God is present in their lives not only when they receive the sacraments of Christian initiation, but in other experiences too.” Group one favored the idea of having a coordinator for mystagogy following the model at St. Michael’s, an RCIA team member who is involved throughout the process but assumes the leadership role during the mystagogy period. They have a larger Spanish-speaking group than English-speaking group, so they would either need a bi-lingual coordinator or one for each group. Other strengths are the year round RCIA process, monthly gatherings for continuing formation of neophytes, and the Mass with the Bishop on or close to Pentecost Sunday. They were edified when they read that neophytes at St. Mark’s witness to the parish community at all the Masses on Pentecost Sunday how God has been working in their lives throughout the process of Christian initiation.

Group two was interested in the year-long process for mystagogy that Ron Oakham proposes and how they might implement it in the future. One liturgical feast that is significant for the parish is the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. They spend a lot of time and energy preparing to celebrate this feast but have never considered reflecting on it after the celebration to grasp the deeper meanings and implications of this feast for their own lives.

This segment of the workshop concluded with the facilitator’s input from the research by Dennis Chriszt on effective mystagogy, namely, celebrate the rites well, provide mystagogical catechesis with all the rites beginning with the first one and especially after the Easter Vigil,
gather for reflection on the Sunday readings of the Easter season, emphasize that the goal of
initiation is Christian living, not baptism. She affirmed his emphasis on the role of the priests and
deacons in creating a welcoming environment for neophytes and the importance of educating and
involving the parish community in the total process, inviting them to continue supporting the
neophytes in their participation in liturgy, catechesis, community, and mission.

Once the importance of mystagogy in the total process of initiation was established, the
logical question was asked: “How do you do mystagogical catechesis?” The facilitator
introduced the whirlpool image for mystagogy, describing each of the movements and the
viability of this process for postbaptismal catechesis as well as a process for on-going adult faith
formation for the already baptized (see appendix A.2)). Seeing a visual image of the process was
helpful to participants’ understanding of the dynamic role of memory, imagination, the senses,
feelings, natural elements and symbolic actions in recognizing and deepening the understanding
of the experience of the mystery of God in the liturgical celebrations of all of the sacraments.
Discussion followed on how this process could lead them to grasp the meanings of their
encounters with God in other significant human experiences.

They commented on the interrelatedness of the four elements that they had discussed
with the hula hoop activity. Both groups responded positively to the whirlpool image of
mystagogical catechesis as a method that can be applied over and over again with experiences
that lead to on-going conversion throughout the adult life cycle.

The afternoon session began with small group reflection and sharing of a significant life
experience which has contributed to their growth in faith utilizing the first two movements in
mystagogical catechesis: What did you experience? Return to the experience with all the five senses, feelings, and imagination. What does it mean to you as you reflect on it now? Participants were divided according to age groups (from their 20’s to their 60’s) that corresponded to the time when they had the experience. When they returned to the large group, the facilitator asked them if their remembrance and its meaning was related in any way to their age and life situation at the time of this experience. The majority of them said it did, but now that they are older and have had more experience, they see it in a different light.

This activity introduced the input and discussion on adult faith development. The facilitator stated that as human beings, we not only grow from childhood to adolescence then to adulthood, but rather that in adulthood, there are also stages of growth and development. Utilizing the material on the handout taken from the research by James W. Fowler and Peter Feldmeier, she emphasized the spiritual characteristics identifiable in each stage of adult life (see appendix A.2). Whereas, the goal of human development can be described as self-actualization, the goal of spiritual development is holiness and transformation into Christ, not dependent on human effort but on human response to God’s initiative and grace.

The facilitator summarized her input with the image of the tree in winter and in spring to demonstrate the process of death and life that occurs in the person’s gradual transformation from self-centeredness to centeredness in God (see appendix A.2). This material was new to participants and sparked a lot of dialogue among them. Some participants in group one commented that this information would be very helpful to other adults in another workshop setting where they could have more time to reflect on their experiences and understand how they
are growing spiritually as they age chronologically. Some of the members in group two shared with the large group how the meaning they gave to certain experiences definitely coincided with their stage in the life cycle.

Input from the facilitator on the Church’s task of forming adults in faith followed the discussion. She asked participants to read the excerpts from church documents in the handout and to circle the words or phrases that caught their attention, then share what these words meant to them (see appendix A.2). Participants in group one were affirmed by the material, happy to know how the Church is paying more attention to forming adults in faith. Some of the participants in group two had not been aware of the importance of faith formation for all adults and found the material somewhat overwhelming. They are more familiar with catechesis for children and youth.

Discussion then centered on the need for being more intentional in providing opportunities for adults to grow into more mature Catholics, able to know what they believe and how to make decisions according to Gospel values. Each group mentioned how parents especially need catechesis and support in order to raise their children in faith, acknowledging the challenges and difficulties entailed. The facilitator added that the Church is also committed to assisting every adult in all vocations and life styles in understanding their faith and strives to help adults find adult answers to the faith questions they encounter in their relationships within family, work, Church, and society.

She asked them to review the handout *Opportunities for On-Going Adult Faith Formation* and to select those that they have experienced (see appendix A.2). The facilitator
added the last six which includes mystagogical catechesis. Participants in group one commented on how there is still much more that they could take advantage of and invite other adults to participate in, especially the accessibility to technology with resources for formation according to their time schedule. They acknowledged that the parish has not given enough time and resources to promoting adult faith formation. However, they have concentrated on promoting and offering retreats for youth and adults, such as ACTS. There was excitement in group two for creating more opportunities for adult faith formation as they identified groups that could benefit from it.

In the next segment, each small group reviewed one of the three models for mystagogical catechesis developed by the writer: birth of a child, matrimony, and the Sunday homily (see appendix A.2). The matrimony group took one of the three sessions instead of all three. Regarding mystagogy for the birth of a child, they commented on some of their own experiences as parents and how helpful this would have been for them because parenthood is such a life-changing experience each time they have a child. However, group one thought that there were too many questions in the first movement of the process. They would feel more comfortable with a few questions to make it easier for the parents to get in touch with their own experience rather than the facilitator being so specific with details of what they may or may not have experienced.

After reviewing the matrimony model, the participants commented on the need for follow-up with newly married couples and how they would receive support from the Christian community through mystagogy which would encourage them in fulfilling their commitment.
They wished this opportunity had been provided for them when they began their marriage. Some of the members in group two were interested in piloting this model in their parish.

Members in group one had never thought about reflecting on the homily together with the pastor and deacons in community, although they always talk about it with their family on the way home from Sunday Eucharist. They understood how this experience has potential within the parish but had reservations in trying to implement it and felt more comfortable with the other two models. Although they didn’t verbalize it explicitly, the facilitator had the sense that they don’t feel qualified to offer any feedback on the Sunday homily because in their minds, that would seem like intruding on sacred ground that belongs only to the ordained ministers. Two of the deacons were present but made no comment in this regard. In hindsight, it may have been helpful to enter into dialogue on how mystagogy on the Sunday homily is not an intrusion on the role of the ordained or a critique of their preaching but an opportunity for everyone, ordained and non-ordained, to be nourished by their reflection on God’s presence through his word.

Their hesitancy made the facilitator realize how important it was for participants to reflect on experiences that they would feel comfortable with if they were going to provide mystagogical catechesis in their parishes. She invited each small group to brainstorm on significant experiences of adults in their parish that they considered conducive for mystagogical catechesis, write them on newsprint, and post them around the room. They walked around in silence and studied each of the ideas marking the three they most favored by numbering them in order of priority. This method proved confusing for group one, so for group two, the facilitator
asked participants to mark the three most significant experiences for mystagogy without prioritizing them, which proved to be more effective.

   Group one offered their ideas: after ACTS (adults and teens), after baptism, confirmation, first communion (with parents and godparents), funerals, births, illness, divorce, graduation, marriage, retirement, golden years, empty nest, financial difficulties, bankruptcy, job loss, credit card debt, elections, parents having difficulties with children, retreats, pilgrimages, teenagers in trouble, death in family, continuing education for in-active parents. It was interesting to see that one small group determined their choices by considering the four elements in mystagogy and placing ideas within each of the interlocking circles. Participants gathered around the table, studied the ideas and the number of check marks alongside them. It was difficult for them to choose three experiences from among so many good ideas. After careful listening to each other, they came to consensus on two experiences from the ACTS retreat and funerals.

   Group two had similar ideas: after any of the sacraments: baptism, confirmation, Eucharist (with children and adults), divorce, pilgrimages, retreats, funerals, homilies, Advent season, bible study groups, prayer groups, post-illness, after service projects, religious feasts, neophytes, death, divorce, marriage, co-habitation, suicide, elder abuse, abortion, addiction, loss of job, health, spiritual experiences in marriage, meditation, prayer groups, teen pregnancies, several months after they’ve completed ACTS or Cursillo (include a sit-down dinner, discuss how each participant felt before and after the experience, finish with how we invite others to participate). The writer pointed out to the group that some of their ideas referred to specific groups who need adult catechesis but are not specific experiences for mystagogical catechesis.
After much discussion, they chose Confirmation, one experience from Cursillo and one from ACTS for their parish.

ACTS is an acronym for Adoration, Community, Theology, and Service. It is a three-day retreat which was developed in 1987 by the staff from Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Selma, in the Archdiocese of San Antonio as a follow-up to the Cursillo. The rituals and personal testimonies of team members move the hearts of participants to conversion to Jesus Christ. It also provides a formation experience for the team who meets for thirteen weeks to prepare the retreat as outlined in the manual for leaders which also includes suggestions for assisting retreatants in their continual growth in each of the four areas, but mystagogical catechesis is not one of the suggestions.

The facilitator shared the follow-up steps: 1) she would meet with the core leaders she had met with prior to the workshop to begin developing the first process. Everyone would receive the final copy and be invited to participate in its implementation; 2) they would be receiving a questionnaire at least six weeks after the workshop: one for participants for sharing any later insights/learnings and an update on progress in planning their first session for mystagogical catechesis; the other for leaders, addressing their role in coordinating mystagogical catechesis for their three experiences and other opportunities for adults. In conclusion, participants responded to the written evaluation utilizing the handout on goals and learning objectives in the workshop design sheet, followed by the closing thanksgiving prayer for baptism.
Post-workshop Planning Meeting and Questionnaire

As agreed upon by both groups, several weeks after the workshop, the writer facilitated the planning meetings with parish leaders to begin developing the outline for mystagogical catechesis for the first experience. Six weeks later, she sent the two post-workshop questionnaires to participants and leaders as planned.

The first choice for mystagogy for group one was the foot-washing experience during the ACTS retreat. The writer met with two groups, an English and a Spanish-speaking group, who developed a draft of the process and decided to offer it during Lent for all men and women who have participated in ACTS to prepare them for Holy Week, especially Holy Thursday. Within the framework of the four movements of mystagogy, they brainstormed on the questions for the first and second movements, and studied and discussed chapter seven: “Welcome into the Household of God,” in *Dwelling in the Household of God: Johannine Ecclesiology and Spirituality* by Mary L. Coloe⁵ and the Holy Thursday liturgy for content for movement three. Movement four included a question on each of the elements of mystagogy: community, catechesis, liturgy, and mission for participants to reflect on and share in small groups (see appendix A.3).

The RCIA director and the writer incorporated the groups’ suggestions in the final copy of the process. The writer then translated it into Spanish and sent it to all the participants. A few weeks before Lent, the writer and the groups made final changes, scheduled the date for the

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process, and divided the tasks and responsibilities among themselves such as prayer, environment, group facilitators, catechists, and hosts for refreshments.

The facilitator met with three leaders in group two to plan mystagogy after confirmation. The parish usually has a session with students after confirmation but not with the parents. They envisioned that mystagogy with parents, sponsors and students the week after confirmation would deepen their understanding of what it means to be fully initiated into the Christian community, confirmed in faith, and invite them to continue to participate in the life of the Church and contribute to the growth and vitality of the Christian community. For them, this experience has the potential for changing the current image the parents and students have of confirmation, namely as graduation from faith formation.

After reviewing the four-movement process, they selected passages from Scripture on the Holy Spirit, call to service, anointing, and reviewed the Rite of Confirmation. They developed an outline for mystagogical catechesis with the parents and sponsors. Since students are confirmed in the eighth grade, their parents and sponsors would join them for the opening prayer, divide into two groups for the four movements respecting the adolescent and adult perspectives, come back together to share their learnings, and close with prayer and refreshments to celebrate this experience.

Later, the coordinator for middle school students consolidated their ideas into a draft and sent it to the leaders and to the facilitator. They reviewed it and offered suggestions for each of the movements. The leaders will finalize the process and send it to the other workshop participants (see appendix A.4). The confirmation coordinator will use the model for parents and
sponsors to introduce mystagogy to the catechists for confirmation and invite them to participate in developing the process for the students.

**Conclusion**

The writer’s vision for the project prompted the selection of two Texas parishes that were not implementing postbaptismal mystagogy. The pre-workshop survey and the meeting with parish leaders made her conscious of designing the workshop in light of the participants’ need for greater knowledge and understanding of mystagogy. The processes, input, reflections, and discussions during the training workshop enabled participants to enter into their own journey of faith, to share their own sacramental vision as believers, and to explore the strengths and limitations in their ministry with adults and the need for providing more opportunities for adults to participate in the life of the parish and contribute to its vitality.

The preliminary planning of mystagogy for one experience in the ACTS retreat by leaders in group one and for the parents and sponsors of confirmation students by group two enabled them to apply their learnings and motivated them to share their experience of the workshop with other parishioners. They introduced the parishioners to mystagogy as a process, not a program, that can enlighten their understanding and deepen the meaning of their life experiences in a way that draws them closer to Christ and to the Christian community. Both groups exemplified a great willingness to undertake something completely new, yet promising, for revitalizing the faith life of adults in their parishes.
CHAPTER IV
MYSTAGOGY AND ON-GOING ADULT FAITH FORMATION
EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Introduction

In this fourth and final chapter, the writer evaluates the project from two sources: 1) the written responses of participants in the workshop evaluations and the post-workshop questionnaires (see appendix B.1 and B.2); and 2) the writer’s observations of participants’ planning and facilitating one mystagogical session in their parishes. The insights gained from these sources generate recommendations for parishes to become more mystagogical in journeying with adults towards maturity of faith concluding with ways in which the project contributes to ministry in the contemporary church.

Workshop Evaluation

The instrument that the writer developed for evaluation by participants consisted of seven questions which coincided closely with the learning objectives for the workshop. As stated previously in this paper, there were eleven participants in group one and thirteen in group two. The first question addressed the level of relevancy of the content to the topic: Was the material presented relevant to the topic? Nine items were listed in the order that they were presented ranging from the meaning and purpose of mystagogy to the examples of mystagogy for on-going adult faith formation developed by the writer with responses on a scale from four to one: 4: extremely relevant, 3: relevant, 2: somewhat relevant, and 1: not relevant, with space for comments. All of the material was rated either ‘extremely relevant’ or ‘relevant’ by most participants in both groups.
It is interesting to note, that for group one the material on adult faith was extremely relevant: 10 out of 11 participants chose “adult faith development” and “examples of mystagogy for ongoing adult faith formation,” and 9 out of 11 chose “ideas/programs for adult faith formation.” It could be because currently ACTS retreats are the primary way in which adults are being evangelized and they see the need for building on that experience and providing more avenues for adults to grow in faith. Group two found the material on post-baptismal mystagogy extremely relevant: 11 out of 13 chose “meaning and purpose of mystagogy,” 10 out of 13 chose “elements in mystagogy,” and 9 out of 13 chose “steps in the mystagogical process.” This may be due to the fact that all of the participants in group two are part of the RCIA team, whereas group one was more diverse. They were interested in learning how to implement mystagogy for neophytes in their parish.

The “meaning and purpose of mystagogy” and “steps in mystagogical process” received eight (4’s) in group one. In group two, eight participants rated “adult faith development” and “examples of mystagogy for on-going adult faith formation” as ‘extremely relevant.’ “Historical background of mystagogy” was rated ‘somewhat relevant’ by one participant in group one and two participants in group two. In group one, “models of postbaptismal mystagogy” was rated ‘somewhat relevant’ by one participant, while “Church’s vision/task of adult faith formation” and “ideas/programs for adult faith formation” were rated ‘somewhat relevant’ by one person in group two. The “historical background of mystagogy” was ‘relevant’ for six participants in group one and nine participants in group two. Comments included growth in knowledge of what
mystagogy is, understanding of the process, and providing a frame of reference and potential for mystagogy for adult formation.

Participants had the same four options for question two: Was the process for agreeing on your three ways/experiences effective? In group one, two people found the process ‘extremely effective’ while nine found it ‘effective.’ They wrote very few comments, but as the writer has already acknowledged, she had to change the process for the second group after the experience with group one. In group two, four people found the process ‘extremely effective’ and commented on their response while eight people found it ‘effective’ with comments on the value of discussion in order to come to a consensus, but also the difficulty in selecting three from so many good ideas. One person found it ‘somewhat effective’ and commented on shortness of time for the process.

Question three required that participants review the learning objectives in the workshop design outlined in the three stages: understanding, knowledge, and assessment evidence. Because there were several objectives for each stage, they were invited to select and describe only one of the learning objectives in each stage that was met.

In stage one: understanding, seven objectives were listed. No one in group one chose the first objective, “the meaning of mystagogy and its role in the Christian initiation of adults” and only one person chose it in group two. Four people in group one and three people in group two chose number two: “steps in the mystagogy process can lead people to continuing conversion and growth in faith.” While only one person selected the sixth objective, “the importance of discovering opportunities for on-going adult faith formation then planning and implementing
them,” three people in group two chose this objective. The other four objectives received one or two choices by both groups. Participants gave diverse comments. No one in group one chose “meaning of mystagogy and its role in Christian initiation of adults,” but one person in group two selected it. Upon reflection, perhaps the writer included too many learning objectives for participants to focus on and it may have been difficult for them to decide which one they understood best. It is also possible that the learning needs of participants were very diverse so they were more attuned to those objectives that responded to their particular learning needs.

Regarding the six learning objectives for stage two addressing knowledge, responses were similar. Four participants in group one and in group two selected “the four elements in mystagogy” and four in group one and three in group two chose “mystagogy as a viable model for on-going adult faith formation.” The other four objectives in this category had one’s and two’s. Assessment evidence as the third stage is crucial for real learning. It requires participants to integrate theory within their acquired pool of knowledge with the opportunity for applying it in a pastoral context. Four objectives were listed: “1) describe the purpose, elements, and process in mystagogy; 2) identify the stages of adult faith development; 3) agree upon three ways in which adults in their parish can grow in faith through mystagogical catechesis; and 4) evaluate the effectiveness of the workshop in light of its stated objectives and your learning needs.” In group one, six out of eleven chose the third objective different from three who chose it out of thirteen in group two. The first objective was chosen by three in group one and four in group two. Two participants chose the second objective in both groups. No one in group one chose the
fourth objective while two chose it in group two. Two participants in group two did not respond to this item in the evaluation.

When asked in the fourth question: *Are there any objectives that were not met? If so, which ones?* four participants in group one gave no response, one wrote “N/A,” and the other seven thought all of the objectives were met. In group two, three gave no response, one wrote “N/A,” and the other nine made individual positive comments. The writer was surprised by the numbers that gave no response wondering if they did not have the time to address this question or if the question itself was unnecessary. One of the leaders wrote, “While vision was addressed at the pre-workshop meeting w/leaders, it was not addressed or incorporated w/workshop” The writer found this comment important which could mean that this person was hoping or had an expectation that the writer would provide some insight into how mystagogy enhances or furthers vision for a parish. The writer regrets that although this was not one of her stated objectives, it is worth thought and reflection for long-term planning.

Question five addressed knowledge and understanding more subjectively: *To what extent did your understanding and knowledge of mystagogy grow from what it was prior to the workshop to what it is now at the end of the workshop?* This question allowed participants to reflect on the total experience of the workshop and gave the writer a different view on the effectiveness of the workshop, especially from the comments that accompanied the choices on the scale from 4 to 1 ranging from 4: great extent to 1: none. The numbers for ‘great extent’ were similar between the groups: six in group one and five in group two. Three participants in group one and six in group two chose ‘good extent’ while three participants in group one also chose
some extent’. The writer was not surprised by these numbers given that there was a great amount of material presented and little time to process the material. Nonetheless, it seems that participants took advantage of all that they could grasp.

Question six: *What is the most important learning/insight that you are taking from this workshop?* received responses on ministerial application of theoretical knowledge as well as personal and spiritual growth. For example, in group two, while two people wrote “the four elements of mystagogy and that mystagogy is a process and not a program” and “the steps of mystagogy and how to use them,” another person wrote “to find depth with Christ our Lord so that I may be a constructive vessel of his love.” Another participant commented: “I have learned that through my own brokenness I have an abundance of love to give.” Some participants in both groups became aware of the need to keep learning. One person in group one wrote “entender mejor para seguir creciendo en mi fe” (translation: Understand better so I can continue growing in my faith). Also in group one, two people gave no response and two others commented on the broadness of mystagogy: “mystagogy is adaptable to all things spiritual and secular” and “ability to relate life experiences to God’s presence as a ‘formation’ program.”

The last section on the evaluation provided feedback on the writer’s knowledge and skills as a facilitator/presenter which is important to her as she continues to develop her expertise in her ministry with adults. Participants were invited to rate the facilitator’s/presenter’s competency in six areas. Options ranged from 4 to 1: extremely competent, competent, somewhat competent, and needs improvement. In group one, ten out of eleven participants rated her ‘extremely competent’ in five of the six areas and in group two, eleven out of thirteen rated her ‘extremely
competent’ in “designing the workshop;” ten rated her ‘extremely competent in four other areas. For the second item, “giving instructions,” five people in group one and eight in group two rated her ‘extremely competent.’

Ratings fell in the ‘extremely competent’ to ‘competent’ except for one person in group one who rated her ‘somewhat competent’ in “designing the workshop;” and one in group two for “conveying information clearly.” Comments from both groups affirmed that the writer: “explained mystagogy very clearly,” “competent, caring and skilled in her adult formation ministry,” “very focused on the topic,” “very informative,” and “very responsive to questions and concerns as well as knowledgeable in the topic.” None of the participants in either group thought she needed improvement in any of the six areas and many gave positive comments with their ratings which were affirming to the writer.

Convinced that insight and learning come in hindsight arising from reflection after an experience, the writer included a post-workshop questionnaire which she sent to participants six to seven weeks after the workshop (see appendix B.2). The purpose of the questionnaire was to allow participants time to reflect on the workshop after they returned to the tasks of ministry to discover what impact the workshop had on their faith life and on their ministry. She was also aware that any good idea remains in the imagination until it begins to take shape within a concrete plan. Therefore, she sent a different questionnaire to the leaders that were involved in the pre-workshop meeting which included questions directly focused on their role in the process of planning and implementing the ways/experiences that the groups had selected for mystagogical catechesis in their parishes.
In group one, seven participants and two leaders responded, a total of nine out of eleven, one participant and one leader did not respond. In group two, five of the participants and all three leaders responded, a total of eight out of thirteen.

Participants responded to three questions. The first question had three parts: *As a result of the workshop: a) do you feel closer to God; b) how aware are you of God’s presence in your life experiences; and c) has your approach and commitment in ministry been affected?* Options were 4: to a large extent, 3: to a good extent, 2: to some extent, and 1: to no extent with space for comments. In group one, for part (a) of the question, two participants felt closer to God ‘to a large extent’ and three, ‘to a good extent.’ Interesting comments from two people were: “I’ve always felt close to God. I don’t think the workshop made any difference,” and “Since this was not the purpose of the Workshop, this question strikes me as ‘does not apply.’ The Workshop was a positive experience, but I went to learn, not for spiritual growth.” The second person made a clear distinction between learning and spiritual growth. In group two, one person did not give a number rating but commented: “Yes, I feel there is a purpose after a sacrament has been received.” Three people chose ‘to some extent’ and one chose ‘to a great extent.’

For part (b) of the question, six out of seven people in group one felt that they were aware of God’s presence in their life experiences ‘to a great extent’ and one ‘to some extent.’ These numbers are significant to the writer because awareness of God’s presence in life experiences is essential not only for growing in a personal relationship with God, but also for accompanying others in their journey of faith. In group two, three people out of five chose ‘to a great extent’
and one chose to ‘some extent.’ Another person wrote: “God is with me in all that I do” but did not use a number to rate it.

Part (c) received high ratings in group one: two participants chose ‘to a great extent’ and five chose ‘to a good extent.’ They included personal comments. One insight from a participant who is Spanish dominant caught the writer’s attention: “Dar mas atención a mi familia-ello
también representan a Dios-llevan la ternura de Dios en ellos” (Translation: Give more attention to my family, they also represent God, they carry the tenderness of God in them).

The second question was: What new insights or learnings have you reflected upon for deepening the faith formation of adults in your parish through mystagogical catechesis? In group one, one person gave no response, two had not had time for this kind of reflection. Other responses included “listening to people’s problems, sharing God’s love with them;” “using parish events and experiences, began an awareness of God’s hand in our lives.” Group two respondents wrote: “on how to incorporate the mystagogical process in all areas of life and not just what was discussed at the workshop;” “maybe we should have mystagogy with all the leaders of the different ministries in the parish;” and “lost coin-the prodigal son - I have reflected deeply on God’s love & forgiveness & how much we can do to help those that have pulled away for some reason or other – we need more topics – or training to reach to others with life’s daily needs & have sessions all yr. round – don’t stop- continue – reaching out w/more topics that the parish community are in need of.” This response could have come from one of the members in the RCIA team who has reflected on what material is covered in the RCIA process and recognizes areas for expanding the process and content for catechumens.
Affirming each individual’s gifts and talents in sharing responsibility for the implementation of mystagogical catechesis in their parishes, the third question invited participants to select tasks they were willing to do from six necessary tasks for facilitating a group. All participants in both groups were generous and chose two or more ways to assist in this process. In group one, three people will “assist in inviting others to participate,” three in group two. For “preparing copies of materials,” two people responded in each group. In group one, one person is willing “to serve as catechists/facilitators” while four in group two offered to do so. Two participants in each group are willing to be “prayer leaders.” Participants seem comfortable with preparing environment: three people in group one and four in group two. Four people in group one and two in group two are willing to “assist in preparing and serving refreshments.”

The questionnaire for the leaders included the first two questions asked of participants, with four additional questions specific to their leadership role. One leader in group one felt “somewhat” closer to God as a result of the workshop and the other one did not respond. However, they both grew in their awareness of the presence of God in their life experiences ‘to a large extent.’ One person is integrating this experience with other faith experiences by stating: “I have been blessed with the opportunity to be exposed to much faith development and catechesis. With all of this and this ongoing formation helps me grow in my own knowledge – being in awareness of God’s presence.” Their approach to ministry has been affected ‘to a good extent.’ One person commented: “I take more time to reflect on my day to day interactions with others and ask the question, Have I loved like God wants me to?” The other leader stated: “reminding
me I must step out of my comfort zone to share gifts received. I stepped up. So many others are hungry, wanting more.”

In group two, three people feel closer to God ‘to some extent’ and one ‘to a large extent.’ This person commented: “I acquired a new way of viewing the sacraments and how I can play a more vital part in helping those involved in learning our faith.” All three felt that their awareness of the presence of God in their life experiences had grown ‘to a large extent’ and expressed gratitude for this gift. The workshop affected one person’s approach to ministry ‘to a large extent’ and ‘to a good extent’ for the other two leaders. Their comments included: “My commitment is what I have seen change – I see the candidates, catechumens with more respect, more encouraging, and I know how much I enjoy what I am doing. I pray asking for more direction and thanking the Lord for letting me continue with his service.” Another leader emphasized: “The workshop and mystagogical experience has enlightened me in the need to minister to the people of God after all experiences:” And still another wrote: “I’m more conscious and conscientious of what I’m doing and/or should be doing.”

Responding to the second question, one person in group one saw similarities between mystagogical catechesis and spiritual direction wherein “experiences of God can be shared in group.” Another person is more attuned to “look at the different activities we experience in and out of our parish as potential mystagogical opportunities.” The responses in group two included the role of prayer and Scripture in RCIA, the need for personal invitation to participate in parish life and in “providing more emphasis on making our sacraments come alive to new recipients and all involved in sacraments.”
Question three invited them to reflect on their leadership role in planning and implementing mystagogy with the experiences selected by the groups. In group one, both leaders see themselves as active and supportive in this role; one stressed the necessary energy and time for planning for this purpose and the other envisions this role as an opportunity for stepping out of her comfort zone from supporting others as they take the lead, to becoming one of them. The leaders in group two see themselves as working along with the pastor, encouraging one another in the process and as an “author of new processes for different groups in the parish.”

Regarding their progress in planning mystagogy for their parish addressed in question four, group one reported their attendance at the planning session for the first experience and planning to continue but nothing definite. Leaders in group two were very industrious and were “continuing to meet, working on schedules” and are also “looking forward to the group of catechists who will benefit from mystagogical catechesis.”

The opportunities and challenges that this project offers to the parishes, questions five and six, are inter-related. Group one’s opportunities revolve around potential for the community’s growth in sharing and understanding their faith expressed through service. They feel challenged to promote this process energetically, deal with skeptical people and invite them anyway, offering places for people to come together. Group two reported the practical aspects of mystagogy allowing people to contribute their gifts and being able “to reach those people who recently experienced Confirmation.” They anticipate some resistance from parishioners because of unfamiliarity with this process and the anxiety and uncertainty within the leaders, “How will we know we are doing it right?” as they implement a new way of forming adults in faith.
Fortunately, the pastor has supported them in the project and they are counting on his continual support and that of the parish staff as they move into providing mystagogy after more of the life experiences of their parishioners. Group one did not mention the pastor in any of their comments. They seem confident of his support and competent in undertaking this project.

This project has sharpened the writer’s awareness of mystagogy in Scripture as she prayed with events in the lives of the disciples who gradually became aware of being in the presence of mystery and understanding the depth of their experiences only after Jesus’ death and resurrection. For example, at the transfiguration they do not understand Jesus’ command “not to relate what they had seen to anyone (Mk 9:9);” and also at the last supper when Jesus responds to Peter’s resistance to having Jesus wash his feet by telling him “. . . what I am doing, you do not understand now, but you will understand later” (Jn 13:7). After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to the disciples on the road to Emmaus and made their hearts burn as he exclaimed, ‘Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke. Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?’ Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the Scriptures” (Lk 24:26–27).

Jesus appears to the rest of the disciples who feed him to prove that he is not a ghost: “Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures and he said to them, ‘Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem’.” (Lk 24:45–47). Their experience of these events makes them responsible for
announcing them to others so that they too may believe in Him: “You are witnesses of these things” (Lk 24:48).

Mary and Elizabeth ponder their experience of the mystery of God in their vocation to motherhood which initiates the new era of redemption. The journey to Elizabeth’s house was a sacred time for Mary to ponder her experience of a gratuitous God, the mystery within her womb, and God’s unfolding plan. Together, the two women spend three months in a sacred pause, pondering, and then proclaiming the mystery of God’s visitation.

**Mystagogy Implemented by Workshop Participants**

In planning their first session for mystagogical catechesis, both groups were very grateful for the writer’s assistance in reviewing the four-movement process and developing the outline for their first process. Fortunately, not only did both groups begin planning a mystagogy experience, they finalized it and offered it in their parishes which went beyond the writer’s original scope of the project. For this reason, the writer has decided to use observations from her experience with these sessions as data for evaluating the project. Group one held the session for the process of the foot-washing experience during Lent 2012 with thirty-six people participating in the English session and forty-two in the Spanish session (see appendix A.3).

During the process, the leaders modeled collaborative ministry as they kept the group engaged, providing input, guiding the discussions, listening, and being attentive to the time frame. The closing prayer was especially significant as participants poured small cups of water into the empty basin, then refilled them, and were invited to use the water to wash another
person’s feet, someone who was in need of their hospitality. They commented on how valuable it was for them to have an experience of the immensity of Christ’s love for them through reflection on the foot-washing experience. The next Holy Thursday will be more meaningful for them. They wondered why nothing like this had ever been done before, and they look forward to other opportunities for mystagogy. They are considering providing this mystagogy session for participants after each of the four ACTS retreats they have each year.

This group of leaders went even further and instead of planning mystagogy for another experience from the ACTS retreat, as they had originally decided, they prepared a series of seven sessions patterned closely on the four movements in mystagogical catechesis. They took a step towards integration of their experience of the ACTS retreat in the context of the daily challenges of Christian life utilizing Coming Down the Mountain: How to Turn Your Retreat into Everyday Living by Thomas Hart.¹ They piloted this project with twenty-four participants during summer 2012 and intend to share it with parish ACTS teams in the Archdiocese of San Antonio who may also need a follow-up after the retreat to journey with retreatants who have just awakened to the gratuitous presence, love, and action of God in their lives and may not know how to respond daily to the mystery or understand how to begin walking in faith.

The leaders in group two took a different route. They invited the writer to plan and facilitate together with them, a mystagogical retreat of the Easter Vigil for liturgical ministers who participated in the experience on Holy Saturday. They believed that engaging in a mystagogical experience would increase their confidence and competence as leaders for planning

¹ Thomas Hart, Coming Down the Mountain: How to Turn Your Retreat Into Everyday Living (New York: Paulist Press, 1988).
and implementing mystagogy in their parish as well as introduce mystagogy to a significant group of parish ministers who would support mystagogical catechesis with other experiences in their parish. Thirty-two people participated in the retreat in June 2012.

The opening prayer began with a short video, “Deep Space Field” by Hubble Telescope, which expands people’s image of the universe as they watch the explosion of light in the galaxies, signs of God’s creative power and imagination. Comments by participants on this video introduced the reflection and discussion on the experience and the meaning of the Lucernarium and reflection on the Gospel. “Chapter 10: The Resurrection — ‘Go!’ ” from Megan McKenna’s book, *On Your Mark: Reading Mark in the Shadow of the Cross,* allowed participants to discover the deeper meanings of the symbols in the resurrection account and the mission of believers.

Returning to their experience of the liturgical rites elicited gratitude for their ministry in witnessing the joy of those who were initiated on Holy Saturday. Due to lack of time, they only briefly touched the liturgy of the Eucharist and concluded the retreat with the renewal of baptismal promises and re-commitment to ministry. The questions in movement four also focused on the four elements in mystagogy and the participants were able to apply these to their personal lives and to their liturgical ministry. The leaders are considering offering a similar retreat to the neophytes next year following the Easter Vigil. After the Sunday liturgy the following day, participants commented on how the Mass was more meaningful for them after experiencing the retreat.

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The writer was edified by the creativity of the leaders and their investment in the process. Both groups were pleased with how easily participants entered into the process. They gained a deeper understanding of the inter-relationship between community, liturgy, catechesis and mission in mystagogy, particularly in developing the questions for reflection and discussion in the process. They expressed a greater appreciation for the richness of ritual and symbol and gained confidence in their ability as leaders to provide mystagogical catechesis for neophytes as well as for other parishioners in the future.

In light of the above, the planning meeting with leaders after the workshop proved to be an essential component for the success of the project. In addition, participants remained very attentive and engaged throughout the process beginning with the pre-workshop meeting, their response to the pre-workshop survey, throughout the workshop, during the leaders’ planning meeting for the first mystagogical process in their parish, as well as in their own implementation of mystagogy. The writer would have appreciated a greater number of responses to the Post-workshop Questionnaire but understands that it may be difficult for some people to provide feedback once the experience has passed.

After reflecting on the experience of the workshop, the written evaluations as well as her observations of workshop participants, the writer concluded that both parishes had their primary focus on catechesis for children and youth. However, group one had more organized activities for involving youth and adults in the parish than group two. Given this reality, it would have been helpful for the writer to include a question in the pre-workshop survey on what each parish was providing for adult faith formation, rather than just how they involved neophytes in
community, liturgy, catechesis, and mission. Their responses would have helped her in taking more time with the groups to explore other avenues for assisting adults in their growth in faith before introducing a broader application of mystagogy which was completely new to them and somewhat overwhelming when the writer first approached the subject. They also needed help in implementing postbaptismal mystagogy for neophytes. Yet, to address these needs, the writer would have needed to develop a separate workshop for adult faith formation and one for postbaptismal mystagogy.

If the writer were to present this workshop again, she would give less time to the historical background of mystagogy to allow more time for discussion on the models for postbaptismal mystagogy and invite participants to reflect on how they would implement mystagogy for the newly baptized members after the Easter vigil. This may provide a smoother transition to introducing mystagogy for other life experiences and be more beneficial for participants. She would also provide a bibliography to help them continue to learn about mystagogy and adult faith formation.

She observed that group two needed more help in preparing the retreat for liturgical ministers than group one needed for their session. They felt the need to experience the four movements in mystagogy and the process involved in moving from one to the other before facilitating their own session. They also wanted to be more certain of how to explain mystagogy to other ministers and parish leaders to gain their support in introducing mystagogy in the parish.

Another reality is that the number of first and second generation of Spanish-speaking Catholics in group one is increasing rapidly while it is decreasing in group two as more
parishioners are bi-lingual Mexican-Americans and more English dominant. This presents the need for parishes whose numbers of Spanish-speaking parishioners are increasing to invite and train more bi-lingual parish ministers to work with the faith formation of adults. The Mexican-American parishioners who have facility in the two languages could become the bridge between the two cultures. Overall, the writer sought to incorporate many new ideas and information within a short span of time but in the hope that participants would understand the potential that mystagogy holds for enriching the faith life of adults in their parish.

**Recommendations**

Through this project, the writer has become more aware of the tremendous need for parishes to evaluate how they pray, work, form relationships, and foster community. There needs to be a paradigm shift from focusing primarily on catechesis of children and youth to one of making catechesis of adults the center of catechetical ministry upon which catechesis of children and youth depends. In order for Catholic adults to witness to gospel values, they need to grow in their ability to reflect on their experiences, to struggle with their faith questions, and to articulate and apply Christian principles and values to the challenges in the society in which they live and work. They need to be invited to contribute their expertise, talents, and gifts to promoting the life, vitality, and mission in their parish communities or the church will become irrelevant in their lives. They may continue to believe in Christ but not be able to converse with a church that does not accompany them in faith in their own “skin.”
The sacraments, which Catholics receive within the community, shape and nurture Catholic identity and spirituality throughout the life cycle. Therefore, mystagogy is intended for the on-going formation of all baptized Catholics after each of the seven sacraments, not only after the Christian initiation of adults. To this end, the rites of passage in Christian life: baptism, marriage and death, deserve special focus. This project challenges parishes not only to prepare people and celebrate sacraments but to go further, to take advantage of the four-movement process of mystagogical catechesis that plunges them into the depths of the mystery, to revive the openness to the power of imagination, memory, symbol and symbolic action for understanding the presence and activity of God in human life.

The writer invites parishes to give considerable attention to how they are preparing parents for their child’s baptism. Parents who are not participating in the life of the church may be coming for the pastoral interview with guilt and insecurity. They are living in a time of repositioning themselves within the church. “Besides, through the pastoral interview one reaches especially persons between twenty-five and thirty-five, that is, a category of the active members of society with the major role of bearing the future but at the same time largely absent from church structures.”\(^3\) This moment holds tremendous potential for evangelization, for inviting them to a lifelong journey in faith rather than a fleeting experience of God’s presence and love.

When parents who are active members of the parish, as well as those who have occasional contact with the church register their infant child for baptism, parishes can engage them and the godparents in a three-step process. First, pastoral ministers begin their preparation

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with mystagogical catechesis on the parents’ experience of the birth of the child, similar to the model presented in this project. Second, they take great care in celebrating the rite of baptism well, conscious of the power of word, gesture, and symbol. Third, they gather the parents and godparents for mystagogy within a year after the experience of baptism and confront them with “the astonishing news of the gospel . . . indeed one of the obligatory points of passage” which provides the opportunity so that

the love that is revealed there opens a space of freedom, but this freedom, no one can gain it without consenting to be converted . . . This call to conversion, in view of the ‘freedom … of the children of God’ (Rom 8:21; see also Gal 5:13), assuredly constitutes one of the primary tasks of pastoral ministers, a task more necessary because many requesters are easily content to identify themselves with a system of religious or even simply moral values.

They will be empowered with the audacity to call God, “Father,” the beginning of an ever-unfolding of mystery in their lives.

Mystagogy for Christian marriage is another opportunity for the Christian community to journey with newlyweds into the mystery of becoming one in Christ and understand the ecclesial nature of the covenant relationship with one another. The model developed by the writer offers assistance to parish ministers dedicated to promoting healthy, holy, Catholic marriages.

As Catholics, we believe “The celebration of the Christian funeral brings hope and consolation to the living. While proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ and witnessing to

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4 Chauvet, 195.

5 Ibid., 195–196.
Christian hope in the resurrection, the funeral rites also recall to all who take part in them God’s mercy and judgment and meet the human need to turn always to God in times of crisis”.

The journey of believers, beginning with the experience of the death of their loved one, the Vigil for the Deceased, the Funeral Liturgy, and the Rite of Committal, and for many concluding with the meal, testify to the promise of future glory in communion with God and all the angels and saints. Even focusing on the physical journey to each place in this experience holds immense possibilities for mystagogical catechesis. In the Mexican culture, family members and friends gather in the home of the deceased for a novena of rosaries and share the stories that keep their loved one’s memory alive, allowing for another opportune time to initiate some mystagogical reflection.

For parishes who have not fully implemented postbaptismal mystagogy, the writer urges them to recover this ancient practice of reflecting with neophytes on their experience of the rites of Christian initiation during the Easter Vigil as well as reflection on the Sunday gospels of the Easter season. This process will elucidate how “they have truly been renewed in mind, tasted more deeply the sweetness of God’s word, received the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and grown to know the goodness of the Lord.” In addition, the extended mystagogy provides more time for new members to experience the full liturgical year, emulating the Christian spirit of the community’s prayer.

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7 RCIA, no. 245.
Flowing from some of the ideas for mystagogy offered by both groups on the difficult, sorrowful experiences of death and losses in life, the writer recommends that pastoral leaders dedicate time for creativity in developing mystagogical catechesis that addresses the mystery of the cross in human life. It is much easier to recognize God’s presence in the joyful moments of life than in the unexplainable, sudden loss of a child or a spouse, crippling illness and other moments of great crisis.

This process contributes to changing people’s misconceptions and attitudes towards God and suffering. Rather than seeing illness and tragedies as a punishment from God, believers will begin to understand suffering in light of the example and teachings of Jesus who labored in love to relieve human misery and was rejected for challenging the powers that inflict suffering on others. He also suffered the consequences of loving as he invited his disciples: “If you want to come after me, you must deny yourself, take up your cross and follow in my steps” (Mk 8:34). This mandate teaches them and all disciples “that God did not inflict this suffering on us, that, in fact, it may be exactly the opposite of what God wanted for us, and that God grieves with us in our sufferings as any friend would . . . at work with us, in the hidden depths of our suffering, to help us bring some good out of it.”

A total solidarity with the human condition demands that death be assumed in the silence of God who does not intervene to spare anyone from it, be it the just One par excellence. It is precisely at the moment when Jesus radically experiences the human condition through the centurion the faith of the church bursts forth: ‘Truly this man was God’s Son!’ There is mystery here. God is never better recognized than in the disfigured human being on the cross.

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8 Hart, 43.

9 Chauvet, 162–163.
God’s power is revealed in the powerlessness of His Son, becoming more immanent for people who previously experienced a distant or inaccessible God. The GCD 48 reminds us: “Catechesis, however, cannot ignore the fact that not a few men of our era strongly sense a remoteness and even absence of God. This fact . . . surely constitutes a danger for the faith, but it also impels us to have a purer faith and to become more humble in the presence of the mystery of God, as we ought.”

**Contribution to Ministry**

This project enables parishes to integrate the process and elements in mystagogy: community, catechesis, liturgy, and mission in new and creative ways that bring adults into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ throughout their lives of Christian discipleship. It draws them into a deeper awareness of unexpected places and experiences for discovering the mystery of God. Rather than looking for God in the spectacular or extraordinary occurrences of human life, mystagogy enables believers to recognize and rejoice in the wonder of God at every turn in their journey of faith, opening their hearts to conversion in adult life.

How do we celebrate and strengthen the new depth of faith? Mystagogical catechesis invites parishioners to come near as Moses did to the burning bush and allow themselves to be drawn into the mystery of God rather than attempt to fabricate their own image of God. It invites them to pay closer attention to the overly familiar ritual actions of the liturgy that continue to surprise them if they are fully engaged in the activity. They will discover that “Catechesis is intrinsically linked with the whole of liturgical and sacramental activity, for it is in the
sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, that Christ Jesus works in fullness for the transformation of men.”

In their document, *Disciples Called to Witness: the New Evangelization*, the bishops of the United States provide alarming insights on the current situation of the Catholic Church in this country. They identify secularism, materialism, and individualism as threats to Christian integrity and faith. They express a deep concern: “there is an unsettling ignorance of the Eucharist as well as an erosion of Sunday as the Lord’s Day dedicated to prayer and rest.” This document cites data from the 2011 report by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), “Sacraments Today: Belief and Practice among U.S. Catholics,” which states: “It is estimated that only 23 percent of U.S. Catholics attend Mass each week.” Some of their reasons revolve around conflicts with time, work, health, and family responsibilities. Two reasons stated, that they do not believe that missing Mass is a sin and that they do not consider themselves to be very religious people, are more significant to the writer because they exemplify the need for spiritual enrichment and depth for those brothers and sisters who live and work among us but who are missing at the Lord’s table. Mystagogical catechesis is a palpable instrument in responding to this need because it begins with the ordinary and extraordinary experiences that weave the fabric


12 Ibid., 2.

13 For the detailed analysis of reasons why Catholics do not regularly attend Mass, see “Sacraments Today: Belief and Practice among U. S. Catholics,” CARA, [carageorgetown.edu/sacraments.html](http://carageorgetown.edu/sacraments.html).
of human existence and gradually draws individuals and groups with all of these experiences into the Christian Story and Tradition that brings them to the Lord’s table with a renewed spirit and sense of belonging with the rest of the Christian community.

The models for postbaptismal mystagogy presented in this project enable RCIA teams to grow in their own faith as they facilitate the faith growth of others. Faith and life intersect exemplifying that “In the final analysis, catechesis is necessary both for the maturation of the faith of Christians and for their witness in the world. . . it is also aimed at making them prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls them to account for the hope that is in them.”\textsuperscript{14} The call to holiness impels Catholic adults to be faithful to the journey “until we all attain to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the extent of the full stature of Christ” (Eph 4:13).

Many of the handouts for the workshop were translated into Spanish, making material accessible to both English and Spanish-speaking pastoral ministers. One of the managing editors from Liguori Publications has dialogued with the writer about the need for new approaches and models for adult faith formation and has invited her to collaborate with them in publishing some of her materials in English and in Spanish to enhance pastoral ministry in Catholic parishes.

Acknowledging the multi-cultural reality of the church, it is critical for parishes and dioceses to recognize the influence of culture and cultural traditions in the on-going conversion and maturation in faith of adults. Mystagogy provides a unifying balm for parishes who are polarized by culture and race because it enables all adults to connect with the basic human experiences of joy and pain that all humans experience and to find the deeper meaning for their

\textsuperscript{14} Catechesi Tradendae, no. 25.
lives that will give them the new eyes to see one another as brothers and sisters baptized into one faith, as the people of God and the body of Christ. The conversion that occurs through openness to the Spirit in mystagogy opens the door for greater commitment to solidarity with the poor and suffering and the impetus for working toward the eradication of all the social evils that threaten God’s planet and God’s people.

Conclusion

From the writer’s perspective, mystagogy as a process and method for the on-going faith formation of adults in Catholic parishes is in its infancy stage. It is not easy to train parish leaders to understand its potential for enriching the faith life of adults given that parishes have many planned activities and programs to implement that are more controllable and predictable than mystagogy. However, the writer’s experience with the two pilot groups proved to be fruitful in the depths of participants’ sharing and ability to get in touch with mystery in various ways. Their questions, moments of pondering and insight are commendable. Her participation in the two sessions of mystagogical catechesis with parishioners in both groups confirmed her belief that tapping into the source of Christian commitment in adults, their relationship with Jesus Christ, has tremendous potential for the growth in faith within Catholic parishes. It is a source for forming parishes into evangelizing communities that will make the Church relevant not only to Catholics but also to those who have not yet experienced the Good News of Jesus Christ.
Final Conclusion

This project has taken the writer on a journey of faith beginning with her awareness of the need for greater implementation of postbaptismal mystagogy for neophytes. This led her to explore mystagogy historically as the final period in the Christian initiation of adults and also to examine its four essential elements: community, liturgy, catechesis, and mission, in light of the church’s ministry of faith formation for the already baptized adults in contemporary society. She discovered the broader understanding of mystagogy as a process and a method appropriate not only for all of the sacraments but also for other pivotal experiences in adult life which leads them to on-going conversion as Catholic Christians.

Her desire to assist parish ministers in their work with adults motivated her to design and facilitate a mystagogy training workshop in two Texas parishes that enabled participants to understand the process and method in mystagogical catechesis as well as practice skills and gain confidence for planning and facilitating one experience of mystagogical catechesis in their local parishes. This positive experience affirms her conviction that adults in Catholic parishes don’t necessarily need more programs but that they will respond to opportunities for faith formation that acknowledge and honor their experiences of the holy and bring them to a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ and their brothers and sisters in the Christian community and in the larger society. It also exemplifies that mystagogy is a powerful instrument in the Church’s efforts for a new evangelization, for a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit and a stronger commitment to Jesus Christ and his mission. The writer challenges parishes to place adult formation at the center of
their catechetical ministry. She urges pastoral leaders to promote creative efforts that will bring more baptized adults to deeper faith and participation in the Christian community, to provide opportunities that will confront them with their own idols, inspire them with the message of the Gospel, and move them to make the changes necessary to live the commitment and joy of their baptism. The attention, resources and efforts of the church also need to reach the Catholics who no longer see her as credible and relevant for themselves personally or for making an impact on the social needs in the world.

*Disciples Called to Witness: the New Evangelization* clearly articulates the church’s responsibility to evangelize which supports the aim of mystagogical catechesis:

The New Evangelization does not seek to invite people to experience only one moment of conversion but rather to experience the gradual lifelong process of conversion: to draw all people into a deeper relationship with God, to participate in the sacramental life of the Church, to develop a mature conscience, to sustain one’s faith through ongoing catechesis, and to integrate one’s faith into all aspects of one’s life.”

The writer is convinced that although the Catholic imagination and sacramental vision may be dormant in the consciousness of many Catholics, it is quickly awakened by sacramental experiences such as the election of a new Pope and sends electrifying energy throughout the world. Catholics are still capable of experiencing the love and touch of God that elicit awe, gratitude, love and hope in their hearts. Therefore, pastoral ministers must not allow the challenges that test their faith to diminish their efforts in revitalizing the church during these tumultuous times.

---

Mystagogy and Adult Faith Formation
Pre-Workshop Survey

Background Information:
Parish ________________________

Ministry Position:

___ Pastor
___ Deacon
___ RCIA director
___ RCIA team member
___ Director of Religious Education
___ Liturgy coordinator
___ Liturgical minister _______________________
___ Social outreach minister
___ Catechist of adults
___ Other ministry _______________________

1. Have you served in any other ministry? Yes, as __________________ No ________

2. Do you participate in the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday in your parish?
___ always        ___   often        ____ sometimes         ___ rarely      ___ never

3. Have you ever served as a sponsor for a person in the RCIA process?
________________________________________________________________________

4. When were you baptized? ___ as a child   ___ as an adult   ___ as an adult through RCIA

5. How would you describe your current understanding of mystagogy?
________________________________________________________________________

6. How well do you feel you understand mystagogy?
___ extremely well       ___well       ___somewhat       ___little       ___none

7. Choose one: Describe how the newly baptized in your parish participate in catechesis, liturgy, community or mission during mystagogy?
________________________________________________________________________
Multiple Choice: Please place a check mark by your responses:

8. Mystagogy was first introduced into the Church…
   ___ by the fathers of the early Church.
   ___ by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.
   ___ by Vatican Council II.

9. Mystagogy is the…
   ___ first period of the initiation of adults into the Church.
   ___ period of evangelization for inquirers.
   ___ final period of the initiation of adults into the Church.

10. The persons responsible for initiating new members into the Christian life are…
    ___ the pastor.
    ___ the catechists.
    ___ the sponsors.
    ___ the entire parish community.

11. Mystagogy consists of…
    ___ prebaptismal catechesis.
    ___ postbaptismal catechesis.

12. The formal period of Mystagogy takes place during
    ___ Advent.
    ___ Christmas season.
    ___ Lent.
    ___ Easter Season.

13. Mystagogy includes…
    ___ meditating on the Gospel.
    ___ being involved in the mission of the Church by doing works of charity and justice.
    ___ participating in the life of the parish community.
    ___ praying and participating in the sacraments, especially Sunday Eucharist.
    ___ evaluating the ministries in the parish.
    ___ overseeing the parish finances.
    ___ reflecting on the mystery of God in life experiences.

14. The goal of mystagogy is…
    ___ baptism.
    ___ living the Christian life.
Mistagogia y Formación de Fe de Adultos Contínua
Inspección antes del taller

Información Antecedente: Parroquia ______________________

Posición de Ministerio:
___ Párroco
___ Diácono
___ Director de RICA
___ Miembro del equipo de RICA
___ Director de Educación Religiosa
___ Coordinador de Liturgia
___ Ministro de Liturgia
___ Ministro de servicios sociales
___ Catequista de adultos
___ Otro ministerio ________________________________

1. ¿Ha servido usted en otro ministerio? Si, ________________________       No__

2. ¿Participa usted en la Vigilia Pascual el Sábado Santo en su parroquia?
   _____siempre  ___la mayoría del tiempo  ____a veces  ____raramente  ____ nunca

3. ¿Ha servido usted como padrino de una persona en el proceso de RICA? ___________

4. ¿Cuando fue bautizado? ___ de niño        ___de adulto          ___ de adulto por RICA

5. Por favor describa su entendimiento de mistagogia.
   _________________________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________________________

6. ¿ Que tan bien siente usted que entiende mistagogia?
   ___ demasiado bien   ____ bien   ____ mas o menos    ___poco   __nada.

7. Escoja uno. Describa como el recién bautizado en su parroquia participa en la
catequesis, la liturgia, la comunidad, o la misión durante mistagogia.

    _________________________________________________________________________________
    _________________________________________________________________________________
    _________________________________________________________________________________

115
Opción Múltiple:
8. Mistagogia fue introducida dentro de la Iglesia…
   ___ por los padres de los primeros siglos.
   ___ por la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de Estados Unidos.
   ___ por el Concilio Vaticano II.

9. Mistagogia es…
   ___ la primera etapa de iniciación de adultos en la Iglesia.
   ___ la etapa de evangelización.
   ___ la etapa final de iniciación de adultos en la Iglesia.

10. Las personas responsables para iniciar a los miembros nuevos a la vida cristiana son…
    ___ el párroco.
    ___ los catequistas.
    ___ los padrinos.
    ___ la comunidad entera.

11. Mistagogia consiste en…
    ___ catequesis prebautismal.
    ___ catequesis después del bautismo.

12. La etapa formal de Mistagogia se lleva acabo durante
    ___ el Adviento.
    ___ la Cuaresma.
    ___ la temporada de Navidad.
    ___ el tiempo Pascual.

13. Mistagogia incluye…
    ___ meditación sobre el Evangelio.
    ___ participación en la misión de la Iglesia por obras de caridad y justicia.
    ___ orando y participando en los sacramentos, especialmente en la Eucaristía
    ___ evaluar los ministerios de la parroquia.
    ___ revisar las finanzas de la parroquia.
    ___ reflexionar sobre el misterio de Dios en las experiencias de la vida.

14. La meta de mistagogia es...
    ___ el Bautismo.
    ___ vivir la vida Cristiana.

15. ¿Qué más le gustaría aprender sobre mistagogia durante este taller?
Mystagogy and On-going Adult Faith Formation
Pre-Workshop Survey Results

Background Information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministry Position</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18 surveys sent</td>
<td>15 received</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deacon</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wife of a Deacon</td>
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<td>RCIA Director</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Education Teachers</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lector</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music ministers</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Catechist of adults</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Retreat Minister</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacristan</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Some are presently serving in more than one ministry.

1. Have you served in any other ministry?

Group 1:
- 7 music ministry
- 4 eucharistic ministers
- 4 lectors
- 1 social minister
- 4 catechists
- 1 adult faith formation
- 3 retreat ministry
- 1 acolyte
- 1 “Cielo” (teacher for after schoolers)
Group 2:
1 Pastoral Council President and Secretary
- 1 altar server director
- 1 lector
- 1 DRE and CCE teacher
- 1 Cursillo
- 1 chairperson of Women’s Cursillo
- 1 Eucharistic Minister
- 1 PowerPoint Tech
- 1 no response

2. Do you participate in the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday in your parish?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>always</th>
<th>often</th>
<th>sometimes</th>
<th>rarely</th>
<th>never</th>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>4</td>
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3. Have you ever served as a sponsor for a person in the RCIA process?

<table>
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<th>No Response</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. When were you baptized? As a child, as an adult, as an adult through RCIA

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Adult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1, not through RCIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2, not through RCIA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. How would you describe your current understanding of mystagogy?

Group 1 Responses
- *método de instrucción en la fe*
- *método de instrucción en la fe*
- I have no understanding of mystagogy; this is the first time I’ve heard of it
- Putting into practice in everyday life the new life received in the sacraments of initiation within a community of believers
- The period after the Easter Vigil where the newly baptized learn of the Catholic faith through the actions of the local Church. Mystagogy is “on-going” not only for the newly baptized but also the whole community.
- little bit – the time following Easter when the newly baptized continue learning – catechesis as community in the family of faith
- Its purpose is to impress on the new, now fully initiated Christian the depth, height, and depth of what it means to be incorporated into the body of Christ and family of God.
- Mystagogy means the explanation of the mystery hidden in the Scriptures and celebrated in the liturgy.
- Mystagogy is the practice of our faith and values in our lives.
- It is the way you live out your life in service to the Lord whether it is in your family, parish, or community.
- a life-long journey of faith formation and putting the faith into action.
- no response
- *La catequesis, liturgia pretende introducir en el misterio de Cristo es mistagogia, signo de lo significado de los sacramentos.*
- vague

Group 2: Responses
- an explanation of the on-going faith development process
- What I understand it to be is our calling once we have received sacraments is to bring souls to Christ and to serve in the church in some way.
- very little
- to serve our Christ
- My understanding of mystagogy (my mystagogy) in my life is very full. I try to communicate “Apostolic Action” in my daily life with my family and my environment (Work, friends, etc. . . .) I try to encourage people to come & work with one another with God.
- It is a never-ending lesson. I learn more every year. It helps me understand stewardship and the importance of it.
- That mystagogy starts at home – Church stories of Jesus can be taught at home. After you become an “elect” you should have a deeper understanding of Christian family life, community - parish involvement
- I would say I have a common knowledge of mystagogy.
- Don’t really know but feel that it is serving God – by serving others – doing God’s work in spreading his word – helping others.
- 3 gave no response
- My understanding of mystagogy is what I have learned through the RCIA- but I’m always open for more thorough understanding of it.
- that as a parish when you go out to serve your community your parish and invite others to follow Christ
- some
6. How well do you feel you understand mystagogy?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extremely Well</th>
<th>Well</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>No Response</th>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
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</table>

7. Choose one: Describe how the newly baptized in your parish participate in catechesis, liturgy, community or mission during mystagogy?

Group 1 Responses

a. Catechesis:
   - encouraged to participate as CCD aides, RCIA co-instructors, participate in CAFÉ
   - Many continue to participate in Adult Ed sessions, retreats, some gather with other newly baptized; still others do very little follow-up
   - CAFÉ for catechesis if they continue to attend
   - as community of faith- continue to have an opportunity to faith share and learn during CAFÉ
   - Many return to CAFÉ and other adult formation programs, some have become catechists, lectors, ushers, and are more faithfully attending Mass regularly.

b. Liturgy:
   - I know of one person that was recently baptized and is now a lector.

c. Community:
   - when they participate it is most often in community
   - *con la comunidad*

Other responses:
- *regularmente bien*
- *regularmente bien*
- three had no response
- For the Easter Vigil Mass they may serve as lectors, (father’s choice). We really talk to them about different ministries in Church and in community. Even social and government issues are discussed. How can you make your family, parish, community or world better by what you do? This is discussed many times. Different representatives come and talk about their ministries.

Group 2 Responses

- 2 gave no response
- They are trying to continue being involved in parish community by attending Mass. I went through the RCIA.
They want to get involved in bringing others (from family to friends) to Mass, to attend RCIA sessions and giving of their time and talents.

Once they have received the Sacraments, they get involved with the liturgy and want to serve as lectors, readers.

Rarely. I do see more that participate that have been part of RCIA.

have seen more RCIA participants become part of the ministries

As a staff member of RCIA- I have seen many of our ministers become very active in the choosing of a certain ministry. Their growth has been astounding

I can say from what I have seen, the participation has increased because their faith has grown from the start of their journey of RCIA and after they have received the fullness of the sacraments and have seen involvement.

We, my husband and I started with teaching RCIA, we went to teaching CCE 4th & 6th grades, my husband performs rosaries and he is in choir, he also distributes Holy Communion to the sick. We encourage our RCIA students to use their gifts and talents and share with others because their journey doesn’t end after receiving their sacraments.

N/A

The liturgy will consist of mystagogy by helping the involvement of the word of Christ.

I have seen some participate.

The mission of the catechesis during mystagogy is to learn and serve Christ and what our calling is.

Continue the catechesis after the Easter Vigil, several parishioners continue to come to Mass. Some have gotten involved in the different ministries of the parish

Multiple Choice: Please place a check mark by your responses:

8. Mystagogy was first introduced into the Church…

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…by the fathers of the early Church.

…by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

…by Vatican Council II.

9. Mystagogy is the…

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…first period of the initiation of adults into the Church.

…period of evangelization for inquirers.

…final period of the initiation of adults into the Church.
10. The persons responsible for initiating new members into the Christian life are...

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11. Mystagogy consists of...

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12. The formal period of Mystagogy takes place during...

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13. Mystagogy includes...

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<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
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14. The goal of mystagogy is...

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<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. What would you like to learn about mystagogy during the workshop?

Group 1:
- the steps of progression in mystagogy
- what methods have been successful in drawing new Christians into full participation in the Christian community
• A firm, confident explanation to guide not only me, but those I teach. How do I introduce greater knowledge and participation
• How mystagogy works in a community if the community knows nothing of even the word (mystagogy)
• effective models for a structured mystagogy – adult faith development
• all I can, this is new to me
• todo lo que aun no se
• estar abierto al taller en todo
• I would like to take the “mystery out of “mystagogy” and to better explain /catechize others newly and cradle baptized how to put mystagogy into their everyday life.
• How to more effectively message mystagogy to our community
• I would like to discipline myself first so that I may be prepared in helping Catholics who are sometimes struggling to live out Jesus’ command to “love one another” (Jn. 15:17). I hope I’m not being too selfish.
• I would like a more depth, simpler explanation of mystagogy

Group 2:
• learn more about life after receiving the sacraments
• everything
• as much as I will be able to
• everything
• What could we do when we see our Christian brothers and sisters are not acting out mystagogy. I know to pray but I have the fear of others being stayed away.
• how to get the elect to continue this beautiful conversion process, and get involved in the parish community so that light will continue to burn in the hearts, home and parish family
• its history and the meaning – How to apply it to everyday life.
• as much as you have to offer during this session
• continuous mystagogy lectures
• need a more in-depth session
• How can you get the “newly Elect” to understand Mystagogy – broken down simple facts
• more about what mystagogy is – ways and ideas to be able to help me and the RCIA group
• 3 gave no response
Mystagogy and On-Going Adult Faith Formation

A Workshop for Parish Ministers

Presented By:
Sister Guadalupe Ramirez, MCDP
Mystagogy and On-going Adult Faith Formation
Facilitator’s Workshop Schedule

9:00  Welcome and Introduction to the workshop, comments on pre-workshop survey

9:15  Opening Prayer

9:30  Role play and discussion

9:50  Mystagogy in Christian Initiation of Adults
   ● Historical background
   ● Elements in mystagogy
   ● Three models of Effective Mystagogy for Neophytes
   ● Check for understanding

11:00 BREAK

11:15 Steps in the mystagogical process
   ● Check for understanding

12:00 LUNCH

12:45 Adult faith formation
   ● Life-changing events in personal journey of faith
   ● Adult faith development
   ● Church’s vision and task of Adult faith formation
   ● Ideas/programs for on-going formation of adults in faith
   ● Three examples of Mystagogy as effective method for On-going Adult Faith Formation
   ● Check for understanding

2:15 BREAK

2:30 Possibilities for Mystagogy in participants’ parish:
   ● Brainstorm creative ideas/ways for adult faith formation through mystagogy
   ● Agree on three creative ideas/ways to realistically implement mystagogy within the coming year

3:20 Written Evaluation
   Follow-up steps: plan and implement ideas, respond to and submit questionnaire on progress in planning and new learning’s/insights closing remarks

3:45 Closing Prayer
### Mystagogy and On-going Adult Faith Formation
#### Participant’s Workshop Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>Welcome and Introduction to the workshop, comments on pre-workshop survey</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opening Prayer</td>
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<td>Role play and discussion</td>
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<td>Mystagogy in Christian Initiation of Adults</td>
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<td>- Historical background</td>
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<td>- Elements in mystagogy</td>
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<td>- Three Models for Effective Mystagogy for Neophytes</td>
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<td><strong>BREAK</strong></td>
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<td>- Steps in the mystagogical process</td>
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<td>12:00</td>
<td><strong>LUNCH</strong></td>
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<td>Adult faith formation</td>
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<td>- Life-changing events in personal journey of faith</td>
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<td>- Adult faith development</td>
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<td>- Church’s vision and task of Adult faith formation</td>
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<td>- Ideas/programs for on-going formation of adults in faith</td>
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<td>- Three examples of Mystagogy as effective method for On-going Adult Faith</td>
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<td><strong>BREAK</strong></td>
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<td>Possibilities for Mystagogy in participants’ parish:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Brainstorm creative ideas/ways for adult faith formation through mystagogy</td>
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<td>- Agree on three creative ideas/ways to realistically implement mystagogy within the coming year</td>
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<td><strong>Written Evaluation</strong></td>
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<td>Follow-up steps: plan and implement ideas, respond to and submit questionnaire on progress in planning and new learning’s/insights closing remarks</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:45</td>
<td>Closing Prayer</td>
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Gathering Prayer: Rejoicing in Christ’s Resurrection

**Entrance procession:** Three groups with banners.

**Song:** Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! (First group)

**Scripture Reading:** A reading from the Gospel of Luke.

*Very early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb, carrying the spices they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the entrance to the tomb, so they went in; but they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus (24:1–3).*

**Song:** Alleluia, alleluia, Alleluia! Alleluia, alleluia, Alleluia! (Second group)

**Scripture Reading:** They stood there puzzled about this, when suddenly two men in bright shining clothes stood by them. Full of fear the women bowed down to the ground, as the men said to them, “Why are you looking among the dead for one who is alive? He is not here; he has been raised. Remember what he said to you while he was in Galilee: ‘The Son of Man must be handed over to sinful men, be crucified, and three days later rise to life.’ ” (24:4-7)

**Song:** Alleluia, Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! (Third group)

**Scripture Reading:** Then the women remembered his words, returned from the tomb, and told all these things to the eleven disciples and all the rest (24:8-9). The Gospel of the Lord.

**R:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**Silent Reflection**

**Response: Sequence**

**Side 1:** Christians, to the Paschal Victim offer your thankful praises!

A lamb the sheep redeems; Christ, who only is sinless,
Reconciles sinners to the Father.
Death and life have contended in that combat stupendous;
The Prince of life, who died, reigns immortal.

**Side 2:** Speak, Mary, declaring what you saw, wayfaring.

“The tomb of Christ, who is living, the glory of Jesus’ resurrection;
Bright angels attesting, the shroud and napkin resting.
Yes, Christ my hope is risen; to Galilee he goes before you.”

**All:** Christ indeed from death is risen, our new life obtaining.
Have mercy, victor King, every reigning! Amen. Alleluia.

**Song:** Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!
The strife is o’er, the battle done! The victory of life is won.
The song of triumph has begun! Alleluia!
Mystagogy and On-Going Adult Faith Formation
Workshop Design

Stage One: Desired Results

Goal:
To enable parish leaders, RCIA teams and catechists of adults to understand the process of mystagogy and to identify ways to create an integrated process for the continuing faith formation of adults known as mystagogy that incorporates the following four elements: catechesis, liturgy, community and mission.

Stage Two: Understanding and Knowledge

Learning Objectives:

Participants will understand:
1. The meaning of mystagogy and its role in the Christian initiation of adults
2. That the steps in the mystagogical process can lead people to continuing conversion and growth in faith
3. The inter-relationship of the elements in mystagogy
4. That faith development is a life-long process
5. That the Church has taken seriously its responsibility for forming adults in the Catholic faith
6. The importance of discovering opportunities for on-going adult faith formation then planning and implementing them
7. The potential in mystagogy for on-going adult faith formation

Participants will have some knowledge of
1. The historical development of mystagogy
2. The four elements in mystagogy
3. The steps in the process for mystagogical reflection
4. Effective models for implementing post-baptismal mystagogy
5. The Church’s vision, task, and efforts in forming adults in the Catholic faith
6. Mystagogy as a viable method for on-going adult faith formation
Stage Three: Assessment Evidence

Participants will be able to:
1. Describe the purpose, elements, and process in mystagogy
2. Identify the stages in adult faith development
3. Agree upon three ways in which adults in their parish can grow in faith through the mystagogical process
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of the workshop in light of its stated objectives and their learning needs

Stage Four: Learning Plan
1. Participate in the opening Easter prayer
2. Role play or observe a role play of a parish staff meeting on Easter Tuesday
3. Discuss: What does this role play tell us about the role of the parish in mystagogy?
4. Explore the purpose, elements, and process for mystagogy
5. Identify ingredients for effective mystagogy by comparing three models of mystagogy
6. Reflect on life-changing events in their personal faith journeys through the first two steps in the mystagogical process
7. Discuss: How do these events relate to mystagogy and adult faith formation?
8. Consider the stages in adult faith development in light of personal experiences shared in the previous activity
9. Identify key elements in the Church’s vision and task of adult faith formation found in excerpts from Church documents
10. Review a list of ideas/programs for providing adult faith formation
11. Explore how the process and elements in mystagogy are demonstrated in three life experiences of adults
12. Brainstorm: In what ways/experiences can my parish use mystagogy for the on-going faith formation of adults?
13. Agree on three ways/experiences in which their parish will incorporate mystagogy in on-going adult faith formation during the coming year
14. Participate in the closing prayer of thanksgiving for baptism

Note: The learning plan was not distributed to participants.

Sources:

Mistagogía y la formación de fe continua de adultos
El Diseño del Taller

Primera Etapa:
Meta:
Habilitar a los líderes pastorales, equipos de RICA, y catequistas de adultos en su entendimiento de mistagogía e identificar maneras para crear un proceso integral para la formación continua de adultos que es mistagogía que incorpora los elementos de catequesis, liturgia, comunidad, y misión.

Segunda Etapa: Entendimiento y Conocimiento
Objetivos:

Los participantes entenderán:
1. Lo que significa mistagogía y su rol en la iniciación cristiana de adultos
2. Que los pasos en el proceso de mistagogía pueden llevar a personas a una conversión continua y crecimiento en la fe
3. La relación entre los elementos de mistagogía
4. Que el desarrollo en la fe es un proceso que dura toda la vida
5. Que la Iglesia ha tomado seriamente su responsabilidad de formar a los adultos en la fe
6. La importancia de descubrir oportunidades para la formación continua de fe de adultos, hacer un plan, y llevarlo acabo
7. La potencia en mistagogía para la formación de fe continua de adultos

Los participantes tendrán un conocimiento de:
1. El desarrollo histórico de mistagogía
2. Los cuatro elementos en mistagogía
3. Los pasos del proceso en la reflexión mistagógica
4. La visión, el trabajo, y los esfuerzos de la iglesia en formar a los adultos en la fe católica
5. Modelos efectivos para llevar acabo la mistagogía post bautismal
6. Mistagogia como un método eficiente para la formación continua de adultos en la fe

Tercera Etapa: Prueba de Asimilación
Los participantes podrán:
1. Describir el intento, los elementos, y el proceso de mistagogia
2. Identificar las etapas en el desarrollo de fe de adultos
3. Ponerse de acuerdo sobre tres maneras en que los adultos en su parroquia pueden crecer en su fe por medio del proceso mistagógico
4. Evaluar la eficiencia del taller a la luz de sus objetivos y las necesidades de los participantes sobre su conocimiento de mistagogia.
Mystagogy

Mystagogy: Meaning of the term:

- From the Greek: verb ‘μιμεω,’ always used in a sacral context and meant “to teach a doctrine and therefore “to initiate into the mysteries”.
- Greek fathers: two meanings: 1) performance of a sacred action and in particular the celebration of the sacraments of initiation; 2) oral or written explanation of the mystery hidden in the scriptures and celebrated in the liturgy.
- Current meaning: signifies catechetical instruction on the sacraments of Christian initiation and to the deeper spiritual meaning of the liturgical rites.
- Broader meaning: explanation of the rites – applied to every liturgical celebration including ordination and anointing of the sick

Source:

Mystery: Meaning of the term:

“Mystery, from the Greek term μυστεριον, connotes something hidden which is to be revealed, something unapproachable which invites entry or something unknowable which offers true enlightenment.”

Source:

Historical Background

Early Church
1. Father’s of the Early Church: Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose of Milan, John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia
2. Focus was on Initiation of Adults
3. Lengthy period of preparation
4. Explanation of the meaning of the rites and symbols came after experiencing the Mysteries of Initiation
5. Mystagogy through daily homilies by the bishop the week after Easter: use of the senses, imagination and memory, typology for understanding the Scriptures
6. Challenge to live the Christian life within a non-Christian, hostile environment
Early Middle Ages
- Community’s baptismal ministry had shifted from adults to children.
- Fewer adults presented themselves for baptism.
- When infant baptism became the norm, mystagogy disappeared.

Twentieth Century
Renewal of Second Vatican Council
- 1963: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium
- 1) Restored the catechumenate for adults: 2) established full, conscious, active participation of the faithful in the liturgy
- Implementation carried out through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (1988)
- RCIA provides the structure for each of the periods in the process of initiation and the stages and rites that correspond to each period.

Implementation of RCIA
- RCIA has great potential to renew and transform parish life
- Mystagogy is the weakest aspect of RCIA
- Mystagogy needs to be fully utilized for neophytes as well as for the renewal of all the faithful

Broader understanding of mystagogy
- “Mystagogy is a form of catechesis appropriate to all practicing believers.”
PERIOD OF POSTBAPTISMAL CATECHESIS OR MYSTAGOGY

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy people; praise God who called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light.

244 The third step of Christian initiation, the celebration of the sacraments, is followed by the final period, the period of postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy. This 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. To strengthen the neophytes as they begin to walk in newness of life, the community of the faithful, their godparents, and their parish priests (pastors) should give them thoughtful and friendly help.

245 The neophytes are, as the term "mystagogy" suggests, introduced into a fuller and more effective understanding of mysteries through the Gospel message they have learned and above all through their experience of the sacraments they have received. For they have truly been renewed in mind, tasted more deeply the sweetness of God's word, received the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, and grown to know the goodness of the Lord. Out of this experience, which belongs to Christians and increases as it is lived, they derive a new perception of the faith, of the Church, and of the world.

246 Just as their new participation in the sacraments enlightens the neophytes' understanding of the Scriptures, so too it increases their contact with the rest of the faithful and has an impact on the experience of the community. As a result, interaction between the neophytes and the faithful is made easier and more beneficial. The period of postbaptismal catechesis is of great significance for both the neophytes and the rest of the faithful. Through it the neophytes, with the help of their godparents, should experience a full and joyful welcome into the community and enter into closer ties with the other faithful. The faithful, in turn, should derive from it a renewal of inspiration and of outlook.

247 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. Besides being occasions for the newly baptized to gather with the community and share in the mysteries, these celebrations include particularly suitable readings from the Lectionary, especially the readings for Year A. Even when Christian initiation has been celebrated outside the usual times, the texts for these Sunday Masses of the Easter season may be used.

248 All the neophytes and their godparents should make an effort to take part in the Masses for the neophytes and the entire local community should be invited to participate with them. Special places in the congregation are to be reserved for the neophytes and their godparents. The homily
and, as circumstances suggest, the general intercessions should take into account the presence and needs of the neophytes.

249 To close the period of postbaptismal catechesis, some sort of celebration should be held at the end of the Easter season near Pentecost Sunday; festivities in keeping with local custom may accompany the occasion.

250 On the anniversary of their baptism the neophytes should be brought together in order to give thanks to God, to share with one another their spiritual experiences, and to renew their commitment.

251 To show his pastoral concern for these new members of the Church, the bishop, particularly if he was unable to preside at the sacraments of initiation himself, should arrange, if possible, to meet the recently baptized at least once in the year and to preside at a celebration of the eucharist with them. At this Mass they may receive holy communion under both kinds.

*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, 151–152.

**MYSTAGOGY**

22 After the completion of their Christian initiation in the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and eucharist, the neophytes should begin the period of mystagogy by participating in the principal Sunday eucharist of the community throughout the Easter season, which ends on Pentecost Sunday. They should do this as a body in company with their godparents and those who have assisted in their Christian formation.

23 Under the moderation of the diocesan bishop, the mystagogy should embrace a deepened understanding of the mysteries of baptism, confirmation, and the eucharist, and especially of the eucharist as the continuing celebration of faith and conversion.

24 After the immediate mystagogy or postbaptismal catechesis during the Easter season, the program for the neophytes should extend until the anniversary of Christian initiation, with at least monthly assemblies of the neophytes for their deeper Christian formation and incorporation into the full life of the Christian community.

366 APPENDIX III: NATIONAL STATUTES FOR THE CATECUMENATE

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ETAPA DE LA CATEQUESIS POSTBAUTISMAL O MISTAGOGIA

Tú eres una raza escogida, un sacerdocio real, un pueblo santo; bendice a Dios que te ha llamado de las tinieblas a su maravillosa luz

244 La tercera etapa en la iniciación cristiana, la celebración de los sacramentos, es seguida por la etapa final, el tiempo de catequesis postbautismal o mistagogia. Esta es una etapa para que la comunidad y los neófitos crezcan juntos en una percepción más profunda del misterio pascual y hagan parte integral de su vida meditando en el Evangelio, compartiendo en la Eucaristía, y haciendo obras de caridad. Para fortalecer a los neófitos al principio de su camino en la nueva vida, la comunidad de los fieles, sus padrinos y los sacerdotes de la parroquia (los pastores) deben ofrecerles ayuda con interés y amistad.

245 Los neófitos son, como el término "mistagogia" sugiere, introducidos a un conocimiento mas completo y más efectivo de los misterios mediante el mensaje evангélico que han aprendido y especialmente mediante su experiencia de los sacramentos que han recibido. Porque realmente han sido renovados en mente, han gustado más profundamente la dulzura de la palabra de Dios, han recibido al Espíritu Santo y han crecido en su conocimiento de la bondad del Señor. De esta experiencia, que pertenece a los cristianos y que aumenta conforme la viven, estos derivan una nueva percepción de la fe, de la Iglesia, y del mundo.

246 Así como la nueva participación en los sacramentos ilumina el conocimiento de los neófitos sobre las Escrituras, así también aumenta su contacto con el resto de los fieles y tiene un impacto en la experiencia de la comunidad. Como resultado, la relación entre los neófitos y los fieles se hace más fácil y provechosa. La etapa de la catequesis postbautismal es de gran significado tanto para los neófitos como para el resto de los fieles. Durante ella los neófitos, con la ayuda de sus padrinos, deben experimentar una plena y gozosa integración en la comunidad y entrar en trato más íntima con los otros fieles. Los fieles, a su vez, deben derivar de ella una renovada inspiración y mayor entusiasmo.

247 Puesto que el espíritu y el poder distintivo de la etapa de la catequesis postbautismal o mistagogia se derivan de la nueva experiencia personal de los sacramentos y de la comunidad, su lugar principal es en que se llama Misas para los neófitos, esto es, las Misas dominicales del tiempo de Pascua. Además de ser ocasiones para que los recién bautizados se reúnan con la comunidad y compartan en los misterios, estas celebraciones incluyen particularmente lecturas apropiadas del Leccionario, especialmente las lecturas del Ano A. Aun cuando la iniciación cristiana se ha celebrado fuera de los tiempos normales, se pueden usar los textos de estas Misas dominicales del tiempo de Pascua.

248 Todos los neófitos y sus padrinos deben hacer un esfuerzo para participar en las Misas para los neófitos y la comunidad local entera debe de ser invitada a participar con ellos. Se deben reservar sitios especiales en la congregación para los neófitos y sus padrinos. La homilía y, si las
circunstancias lo sugieren, las oraciones universales deben tomar en cuenta la presencia y las necesidades de los neófitos.

249 Para clausurar el periodo de la catequesis bautismal, se debe tener alguna celebración al final del tiempo pascual cerca del domingo de Pentecostés. Pueden acompañar a esa ocasión algunas festividades según la costumbre local.

250 En el aniversario de su Bautismo los neófitos deben ser congregados a fin de dar gracias a Dios, cambiar entre sí sus experiencias espirituales, y renovar su compromiso.

251 Para mostrar su cuidado pastoral para estos nuevos miembros de la Iglesia, el obispo, particularmente si no le fue posible presidir el mismo los sacramentos de la iniciación, debería hacer los arreglos, si es posible, para reunirse con los recién bautizados por lo menos una vez en el año y presidir una celebración eucarística con ellos, en la cual pueden recibir la Sagrada Comunión bajo los dos especies.

*Rito de La Iniciación Cristiana de Adultos, 149–150.*

**MISTAGOGIA**

22 Después de terminar la iniciación cristiana con los sacramentos del Bautismo, de la Confirmación y de la Eucaristía, los neófitos deben empezar la etapa de la mistagogia participando con la comunidad en la Eucaristía principal de cada domingo durante todo el tiempo pascual, el cual termina el domingo de Pentecostés. Deben hacer esto como grupo en compañía de sus padrinos y de aquellos que ayudaron a su formación cristiana.

23 Bajo la supervisión del obispo diocesano, la etapa de La mistagogia debe abarcar una comprensión más profunda de los misterios del Bautismo, de la Confirmación, y de la Eucaristía, y especialmente de la Eucaristía como la celebración continua de la fe y la conversión.

24 Después de la mistagogia inmediata o catequesis postbautismal durante el tiempo pascual, el programa para los neófitos debe extenderse hasta el aniversario de su iniciación cristiana, con reuniones mensuales de los neófitos, por lo menos, para continuar profundizando su formación cristiana y su incorporación a la vida plena de la comunidad cristiana.

*Estatutos Nacionales para el Catecumenado, 356.*

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Elements in Mystagogy

Community

Liturgy

Catechesis

Mission
Elementos en Mistagogia

Comunidad

Liturgia

Catequesis

Misión
Model for Mystagogy
St. Michael Parish
Livermore, California

Pastor: Reverend Robert Mendonca
RCIA Coordinator: Louise Ridsdale
  Catechumenate Coordinator: Marjorie Melendez
  Inquiry Coordinator: Debra Post
  Purification and Enlightenment and Dismissal Coordinator: Louise Ridsdale
  Mystagogy Coordinator: Lisa Malone

Goal:
To accompany the neophytes and the parish community as they deepen their grasp of the paschal mystery and make it a part of their lives. RCIA #244

Background:
St. Michael Church is a parish of 4,300 families with eight Sunday Masses. The RCIA is an ongoing year round process. Catechumens and candidates participate in the Rite of Dismissal each regular Sunday at the 9:30 a.m. mass and at all holy days of obligation. Catechumenate and inquiry sessions are held separately every Tuesday evening except during the month of July.

The RCIA coordinator through the years has worked diligently at forming the assembly in the meaning of Christian Initiation with its periods and corresponding rites. Her main goal in this endeavor is to convey to the baptized community the part it plays and its apostolic responsibility in the initiation of adults into Christ.

The catechumenate coordinator writes a weekly bulletin article, The RCIA Corner, in support of the whole process. These articles serve to reinforce the catechesis of the general parish community. She uses her column to keep the parish connected to RCIA doings, to acknowledge milestones of the catechumens, candidates, elect and neophytes; to recognize team members and to reflect on the deeper mysteries of our faith.

In the church courtyard there is a prominent shadow box displaying photographs of catechumens, candidates and their sponsors and all major rites and events. It provides a visual reminder of the Christian initiation process to the whole community. This glass case is maintained by a former neophyte.

Mystagogy is something that happens during the process – beginning in inquiry, and continuing throughout the catechumenate, purification and enlightenment stages, Easter season and beyond. All facilitators provide mystagogical reflection after each public rite of the process and all parish community events in which we participate. By conscious design and intent, these components
work together to prepare participants for the formal period of mystagogy. Active mystagogy is what we are all called to do as Christians.

**Elements Essential to the Ministry of the Mystagogical Catechist**

- Creative
- Savors own baptismal experience and can enable others to savor the experience and see its implications.
- Ability to help the group to:
  - sustain a celebration for 50 days
  - break open the mysteries of the Easter Vigil
  - communicate with team, staff, and parish
  - draw people from the larger parish community to share their living out of baptism
  - set its own agenda and be its own leadership for the mystagogical year

**Formal Period of Mystagogy:**

The post-baptismal period of Christian initiation begins with a potluck supper with the newly baptized, family, sponsors, and team on Easter Monday. The focus is to reflect on the neophytes’ experience of their initiation and the Easter mysteries.

During all the Sundays of the Easter season, post-baptismal catechesis is held for one hour after the 9:30 a.m. Mass. Sponsors, families, team and community are also invited to attend. The mystagogy coordinator and other attendees spend time reflecting with the neophytes on their experience of full and active participation in the Mass, giving particular attention to the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

As the Easter season progresses, input from the neophytes is solicited as to what particular topics for discussion, activities, and catechesis they desire to continue their process of integration into the parish life.

A general intercession runs throughout the Easter season taking into account the presence and needs of the neophytes. RCIA #248

During the Easter season, the neophytes are invited to Cathedral of Christ the Light in Oakland to celebrate a Neophyte Mass with the Bishop as the presider. RCIA #251

On the Sundays that follow Easter Vigil, the neophytes continue to wear their baptismal garments as a visible sign to themselves and the community of their new status. On Pentecost Sunday, a simple ritual takes place in which the neophytes remove their white robes and place them on the empty seat for the next group of neophytes. They then take their seat in the assembly. RCIA #249

Following mass, a mystagogical reflection takes place on the laying aside of their physical robes. This concludes the formal period of mystagogy.
Ongoing Mystagogy … Living the Christian Life:
Mystagogy continues after the Easter season, meeting monthly to provide connection and support as the neophytes continue their transition to parish life and participate in parish activities. Monthly activities are a combination of liturgy and prayer, works of charity and continued catechesis. See examples under each title:

1. Liturgy and Prayer
   - Weekly participation in Sunday Eucharist.
   - The Sacrament of Reconciliation
   - Introduction to popular devotions and Catholic traditions not included during the RCIA process.
     Examples: line by line reflection on the Lord’s Prayer, how to pray the rosary, Adoration, novenas

2. Works of charity:
   - Santa’s Secret Service: Parish volunteers including neophytes collect gifts, sort and distribute them and sing Christmas carols to senior citizens at the retirement center and patients at the VA Hospital
   - Feed the hungry: prepare and serve meals for those in need within the diocese.
   - Collect donations to assist parishioners undergoing difficulties.
   - Veterans outreach

3. Catechesis:
   - The parish works to encourage ongoing adult faith formation for all the baptized.
   - Speakers are invited to give presentations
   - Study of the lives of the apostles and saints
   - Tour of the cathedral
   - Scripture study
   - Small Christian community groups
   - Preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Outcome
Neophytes are encouraged to spend their first year focusing on their full participation in the Mass and parish life. After having had a sufficient period of time of living the Catholic life, they are encouraged to serve in parish ministry. All neophytes are invited to participate in mystagogy and continue to grow in faith by participating actively in the parish, contributing their gifts and talents for the continuing life and growth of the faith community.

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Background Information:
St. Mark’s has a year-round catechumenate which serves people from within the parish boundaries as well as those persons in the surrounding geographic area. They have a mystagogy team within the RCIA team. In November, the parish has a rite for those entering into full communion in the Church followed by eight weeks of mystagogy.

Period of Mystagogy:
The neophytes continue to participate in Sunday Eucharist. The RCIA sessions are held on Wednesday evenings from 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Therefore, the Mystagogy team follows the same schedule for the gatherings with the newly baptized during the weeks of the Easter season. They use the manual for mystagogy published by Resources for Christian Living. Parishioners serving in different ministries are also invited to share information about their ministry with the newly baptized and invite them to consider participating in the parish through a particular ministry. The sponsors are responsible for walking with the neophytes during mystagogy. The parish also has a sponsor for those who are not members of the parish who continues to walk with them in their Christian journey. On Pentecost Sunday, the neophytes come before the parish community at all the Masses and witness to their experience of God working in their lives through the process of Christian Initiation.

Living the Christian life of discipleship:
During the rest of the year, the sponsors continue to walk with the neophyte as they begin to live the Christian life, participate in liturgy and get involved in mission through parish ministry as well as other works of charity. They are invited to continue their faith formation through parish opportunities as well as other activities. Many of them participate in ACTS retreats and also serve as team members.

Outcome:
There is a very positive outcome as the majority of the neophytes put their faith in action contributing their gifts and talents to the growth in faith of the parish community.

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Liturgical Year Model for Mystagogy

Sundays of the Easter Season: Gather with neophytes for reflection on the Scriptures.

A Lenten project for neophytes: prepare and coordinate the reception for the new group of neophytes following the Easter Vigil.

- Fast on the day of weekly meetings, gather for evening prayer and simple meal, then work on the task
- Share stories of triumphs and tribulations in living as committed Christians
- Take stock of how they have been faithful to their commitment, where they have failed, and what new commitments they are going to make at the Easter Vigil when they renew their baptismal promises

Periodic meetings on particular liturgical feasts and saints days

- Include liturgical prayer (celebration of the Word, liturgy of the Hours or eucharist), a shared meal or a catechetical session (vary the experiences) to complement the core aspect of each gathering to give an opportunity for informal socializing, reflection, discussion, or faith sharing.

Liturgical Feasts:

1. Saints
   Invite the neophytes to participate in the celebration of the patron saint of the parish, anniversary of the parish, feasts of saints revered by the community because of its ethnic or racial composition or regional location; or patron saint of religious priests and religious serving in the parish. These feasts remind us that we are part of a universal community and helps neophytes experience how the daily calendar can give support and sustenance to our Christian life.

2. June 24th: Feast of John the Baptist
   First level of reflection: use summer solstice as jumping off point to explore the summers and winters in our lives. Are we aware of a rhythm in our personal lives? The purpose of this exploration is to become aware of the difficult times in people’s lives so we might be supportive of them during these times.
   Second level of reflection: John the Baptist’s need to decrease while Jesus increased. What in our lives is out of sync with the tempo of Jesus?
   Conclusion: Celebration of evening prayer – a prayer that includes the lucernarium (a celebration of light as night descends). Resource: Evening Prayer by Liturgy Training Publications
3. **September 14th: Triumph of the Cross**

   Celebrate an extended liturgy of the Word using prayers and readings of the feast. Allow for sharing through a dialogue homily. Recall their signing with the sign of the cross at the acceptance into the catechumenate and at baptism. The readings speak of being distraught and being raised. It is five months since Easter. How has the journey been since they picked up the cross to follow Jesus? Conclude the liturgy with a prayer of blessing for continued strength followed by a signing with the cross.

4. **November 2nd: All Souls Day**

   Neophytes participate in parish liturgy and meet afterwards to share memories of significant people who have died. Discuss Catholic traditions surrounds death and funerals. If they’ve experienced any of these traditions, they may have questions or insights.

5. **First Sunday of Advent or during the first week of Advent**

   Focus on Advent as reconciliation. Invite neophytes to participate in a communal penance service if there is one in parish or set the stage for reconciliation during this time of Jesus’ coming in glory.

6. **Epiphany**

   Come together to celebrate and foster the Christmas spirit.

7. **February 2nd: Presentation of the Lord**

   Traditionally, this is the day that the candles are blessed. Use the rite of blessing of candles for the blessing of candles that will be presented to the newly baptized during this year’s Easter Vigil.

**Suggestions:**

Involving godparents and sponsors in planning and in carrying out these experiences. Allow catechumenate team to attend to the current inquirers, candidates, and catechumens.

**Source:**


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Mystagogía según el año litúrgico

Durante los domingos del tiempo Pascual:
Reunión con los neófitos para reflexionar sobre las lecturas

Proyecto para los neófitos durante la cuaresma: preparar y coordinar la recepción para los neófitos nuevos después de la vigilia pascual

- Ayunar el día de las reuniones semanales, reunirse para oración y comida sencilla, luego hacer el trabajo
- Compartir historias de sus triunfos y tribulaciones en viviendo como cristianos comprometidos
- Evaluar como han sido fiel en su compromiso, donde han fracasado, y cuales compromisos nuevos van a aceptar cuando renueven sus promesas bautismales durante la Vigilia Pascual

Reuniones periódicas en fiestas litúrgicas y fiestas de los santos

- Incluye oración litúrgica (celebración de la Palabra, Liturgia de las Horas o participación en la eucaristía), una comida o una sesión catequética (variedad en las experiencias)

Fiestas Litúrgicas:

1. **Santos**
   Invitar a los neófitos que participen en la celebración de fiesta del santo patronal de su parroquia o de santos especiales a su comunidad parroquial o cultural. Estas fiestas nos recuerdan que somos parte de una comunidad universal y le ayudan a los neófitos experimentar como el calendario diario puede apoyar y mantener nuestra vida cristiana.

2. **24 de junio: Fiesta de San Juan Bautista**
   Primer nivel de reflexión: Utilice el tiempo del “solsticio” para reflexionar sobre los veranos y los inviernos en nuestras vidas personales: ¿Estamos concientes del ritmo en nuestras vidas personales. El propósito de esta reflexión es para hacernos más concientes de los tiempos difíciles en las vidas de las personas para poder apoyarlos durante estos tiempos. Segundo nivel de reflexión: Juan Bautista necesitaba minorarse para que Cristo se engrandeciera. ¿Qué en nuestras vidas no está marchando según el ritmo de Jesús?
   Conclusión: Celebración de Vísperas

3. **14 de septiembre: El Triunfo de la Cruz**
   Celebre una Liturgia de la Palabra utilizando las oraciones y las lecturas de la fiesta con una homilía de dialogo. Recuerden la señal de la cruz con la cual fueron señalados cuando fueron aceptados al catecumenado y también en su bautismo. Las lecturas hablan de estar desdichados y de ser resucitados. Son cinco meses desde la Pascua. ¿Cómo han experimentado su jornada desde que levantaron su cruz para seguir a Jesús? Concluya la liturgia con una bendición y la señal de la cruz en la frente de cada participante.
4. 2 de noviembre: Fiesta de los fieles difuntos:
   Que los neófitos participen en la eucaristía parroquial y que se reúnan después de la eucaristía para compartir sus recuerdos de seres queridos que han fallecido. Discuten tradiciones católicas sobre la muerte y los funerales. Tome tiempo para que hagan preguntas sobre sus experiencias y lo que significan.

5. Primer domingo de Adviento o la primera semana de Adviento:
   Enfóquese sobre la reconciliación. Invite a los neófitos que participen en la celebración común del sacramento de la reconciliación si la hay en su parroquia o prepare a los neófitos para su confesión individual durante este tiempo.

6. La Epifanía:
   Reúnanse para celebrar y fomentar el espíritu navideño.

7. 2 de febrero: La Presentación del Señor (la candelaria)
   En este día en que se bendicen las velas, utilice el rito para la bendición de las velas que se les van a dar a los neófitos durante la vigilia pascual.

**Sugerencia:** Involucre a los padrinos para preparar y llevar acabo estas reuniones. Deje que el equipo de RICA se encargue de los candidatos y catecúmenos.


Con permiso.
Mystagogy
Begins with a significant experience

1. Return to the Experience
   (Use imagination, memory, the senses, feelings, symbols, gestures)

2. Reflect on the Meaning
   (initial level)
   - Affirmations, challenges, insights, questions about relationships, beliefs, priorities

3. Recognize and Relish the Mystery
   In light of the Christian Story and Tradition
   - Deeper Levels
     (Scriptural, ecclesial, liturgical, Christological, doctrinal)
   - Catechesis

4. Respond to the Mystery
   Implications for Christian Living
   - Conversion & discipleship
   - Decisions and Moral Actions
   - Mission: charity & justice
Mistagogia
Empieza con Una Experiencia Significante

1. Retorne a la experiencia (con su imaginación, memoria, cinco sentidos, sentimientos, símbolos, gestos)

2. Reflexione sobre lo que significa (nivel inicial)
   - Afirmaciones y desafíos
   - Percepciones y preguntas sobre relaciones, perspectivas, y prioridades

3. Reconozca y saboree al Misterio a la luz de la Historia y Tradición Cristiana
   - niveles más profundos (bíblico, eclesial, litúrgico Cristológico, doctrinal)
   - catequesis

4. Responda al Misterio
   Implicaciones para la vida Cristiana
   - Conversión, discípulo
   - decisiones y acciones morales
   - misión: caridad y justicia
Faith Development in Adult Life

**God’s desire:**
God calls human beings to an intimate relationship with him and to partnership with him in his great work of establishing his kingship of love and justice in the world. This becomes the Christian’s vocation in life. Transformation towards this vocation requires development and conversion.

**Early Adulthood:** Characterized by pursuing one’s dream; developing one’s gifts and talents; getting an education; embarking on a career; coming to a positive sense of oneself and power, engagement with the world; forming relationships; making commitments; striving towards success.

**Spiritual Characteristics:** Search for identity, intimacy and purpose, prayer by thoughts, internalize faith, practice faith, and do good, know shadow side of the self and the role of grace, striving to live one’s values.

**Task of the Christian community:** to invite them to shape their dream in terms of vocation; provide an environment that includes God’s desire within their dream for themselves. Provide questions that allow them to reflect on what they do well, what gives them the most satisfaction; what they feel that God and they can do with their life that will make a difference in our world. Affirm their uniqueness and zeal. Invite them to trust God’s action and desire for them. Help them recognize that faithfulness to commitments is an expression of their vocation.

**Middle Adulthood:** Characterized by having experienced the disillusionment of the structures and commitments they put their faith in during young adulthood; making adjustments to their dream; realizing the limits of rooting oneself only in the capabilities of one’s ego.

**Spiritual Characteristics:** deepening the spiritual foundations of their lives; deciding on priorities, re-addressing the issue of partnering with God as the true ground of their being; letting go and allowing God to have more control over their lives; know their internal strengths, virtues, weaknesses; grow in self-sacrifice; understanding and desiring to empty themselves out of love for God and others (kenosis); having become themselves allows them to give themselves away. Prayer of receptivity, silence, intuition.

**Older Adulthood:** Characterized by dignity and courage; acceptance of limits and bodily deterioration; forgiveness of the past; freedom and energy to initiate new projects; more open to the grandeur of life and the world.

**Spiritual Characteristics:** Peace, joy from being faithful to one’s vocation even in the midst of suffering; able to preserve the sense of vocation for others to participate in it; gratitude, playfulness and flexibility; rejoice in the sacramentality of creation with a sense of awe; magnanimity - more inclusive in loving people; embrace differences; surrender to God’s desire, confront death with hope in God’s transforming love; contemplative and intuitive prayer.

**Sources:**


El Desarrollo de Fe en la Vida de los Adultos

**El Anhelo de Dios:**
Dios llama a los seres humanos a una relación íntima con El y a una colaboración con El en Su gran obra de establecer su reinado de amor y justicia en el mundo. Esto se convierte a lo que es la vocación del cristiano. La transformación hacia esta vocación requiere desarrollo y conversión.

**El Joven Adulto:** Se caracteriza por el perseguiimiento de su anhelo, desarrollando sus dones y talentos, educación académica, forjando su carrera, realizando un auto-estima positivo, formando relaciones, haciendo compromisos, esforzándose para un buen éxito,

**Características Espirituales:** La búsqueda de una identidad propia e intimidad en relaciones, reclamar una fe personal, y practicar la fe, oración de pensamientos y palabras, vivir sus valores, fervor en buenas obras.

**El trabajo de la comunidad cristiana** es de invitar a los jóvenes adultos a forjar sus anhelos en términos de su vocación; a proveer un ambiente que incluye el anhelo de Dios dentro de sus anhelos. Ayudarles a reflexionar sobre sus intereses, lo que les trae más satisfacción personal, lo que ellos sienten que Dios y ellos pueden hacer con sus vidas que va a tener un impacto en el mundo. Mientras que están esforzándose para poner raíces en el mundo, que también hagan el esfuerzo de abrirse a la acción de Dios en sus vidas. Asegurar su existencia única e invitarlos a confiar en Dios.

**El Adulto de Edad Media:** Se caracteriza por haber experimentado las desilusiones de las estructuras e compromisos en los que han puesto su fe durante su juventud, ajustando su anhelo, dándose cuenta de los límites de confiar solo en si mismo.

**Características Espirituales:** profundizando su fundación espiritual, escogiendo sus prioridades y enfrentando de nuevo su colaboración con Dios; descubriendo que Dios es su fundamento principal, dándole más control a Dios sobre sus vidas. Esto requiere dejando otras cosas atrás; conociendo sus propias fuerzas, virtudes, y debilidades; creciendo en su capacidad de sacrificarse por otros; comprendiendo y anhelando poder vaciarse por amor a Dios y a los demás (kenosis) mas capaz de poder darse a otros. Oración de apertura a Dios, silencio, e intuición.

**El Adulto de Edad Madura:** Se caracteriza por la dignidad y valentía, acepta sus límites, perdona al pasado; goza de la libertad y tiene la energía para iniciar proyectos nuevos, mas abierto a la grandeza de la vida y del mundo.

**Características Espirituales:** Paz, gozo que surge de fidelidad a su vocación en medio del sufrimiento, capaz de conservar la vocación para que otros puedan participar en ella; agradecimiento, juguetón, y flexible, regocijando en la sacramentalidad de la creación; magnánimo – mas inclusiva en amando a otros, abrazando la diversidad, entregándose al anhelo de Dios, oración de presencia y contemplación; enfrentando la muerte con seguridad del amor transformativo de Dios.

Translation from sources:

Transformation is the…

…gradual conversion from groundedness in oneself
to groundedness in God;

moving from my personal dream towards living within God’s dream
in a Christian Community
as the fulfillment of my personal dream.

“All of us, then, reflect the glory of the Lord with uncovered faces; and that same glory, coming from the Lord, who is the Spirit; transforms us into his likeness in an ever-greater glory.” (2 Corinthians 3:18)
Transformación es la…

…conversión gradual de confiar en mis propias fuerzas y habilidades;

a poner mi confianza total en Dios.

Es el movimiento de dejar atrás mi sueño personal
y vivir dentro del sueño de Dios en una comunidad Cristiana
que es a la vez el cumplimiento de mi sueño personal.

“Por eso todos nosotros andamos con el rostro descubierto, reflejando como un espejo la gloria del Señor, nos vamos transformando en imagen suya más y más resplandeciente por la acción del Señor que es espíritu.” (2 Corintios 3:18)
The Church’s Vision and Task of Adult Faith Formation

“. . . all the faithful, that is, who by Baptism are incorporated into Christ are constituted the people of God, who have been made sharers in their own way in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ and pay their part in carrying out the mission of the whole Christian people in the church and in the world.”

_Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium_, no. 31.

“Catechesis of adults since it deals with persons who are capable of adherence that is fully responsible, must be considered the chief form of catechesis. All other forms, which are indeed always necessary, are in some way oriented to it.”


“adults in the church that is all Christians — men and women, lay people, priest, and religious — are people who have a right and an obligation to be catechized, just like everyone else (CT,C.v.; can. 217, 774; CL, 34). This reason does not derive from any kind of service which the adult Christian is called to render. It springs directly from the ‘seed’ of faith planted within and which hopes to mature as the adult grows in age and responsibility.”


“Adult catechesis concerns persons who have a right and a duty to bring to maturity the seed of faith sown in them by God. It is addressed to individuals who are charged to fulfill social responsibilities of various types and to those who are prey to all kinds of changes and crises sometimes profound. The faith of adults, therefore, must be continually enlightened, developed and protected, so that it may acquire that Christian wisdom which gives sense, unity, and hope to the many experiences of personal, social, and spiritual life.”


“in the workplace and in academic, professional, civil, economic, political and cultural spheres and wherever responsibility and power is exercised . . . the believing adult is so often the only one who can introduce the leaven of the Kingdom, express the novelty and beauty of the Gospel, and demonstrate the will for change and liberation desired by Jesus Christ.”

_Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community: Some Principles and Guidelines_, no. 22.
“Hence, it is not only legitimate, but necessary to acknowledge that a fully Christian community cannot exist only when a systematic catechesis of all its members takes place and when an effective and well-developed catechesis of adults is regarded as the central task in the catechetical enterprise.”

*Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community: Some Principles and Guidelines*, no. 25.

“We are convinced that the energy and resources we devote to adult faith formation will strengthen and invigorate all the charisms that adults receive and the activities they undertake in the Church and society, to serve the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the people of today. Every Church ministry will be energized through a dynamic ministry of adult catechesis.”


“. . . the maturation of the Christian life requires that it be cultivated in all its dimensions: knowledge of the faith, liturgical life, moral formation, prayer, belonging to community, and missionary spirit. When catechesis omits one of these elements, the Christian faith does not attain full development.”

*General Directory for Catechesis*, no. 87.

“. . . engage the particular needs and interests of the adults in each local community . . . in a way that is accessible to adults and relates to their life experience, helping them to form a Christian conscience and to live their lives in the world as faithful disciples of Jesus. This integration of actual life experiences, diverse adult learning needs, the study of Scripture, and the teaching of the Church’s tradition will create a vibrant learning environment. It will also challenge the creativity of those who establish the direction, plan the content, and provide programs of adult faith formation.”


“. . . those who work with adults in parishes often walk with them as they struggle to find answers to life’s questions within social, economic, and religious structures that surround them. They need to be encouraged to explore the ups and downs of life’s journey through the eyes of faith.”

Opportunities for Adult Faith Formation

- Retreats
- Breaking open the Word
- Encounters
- Small communities of faith
- Adult Faith Gatherings
- Liturgical experiences
- A strong focus on Triduum and the paschal mystery

Source:
Huebsch, Bill. *Dreams and Visions: Pastoral Planning for Lifelong Faith Formation*
Used with permission. [www.23rdpublications.com](http://www.23rdpublications.com), 800-321-0411.

- Parish Renewal processes such as parish missions
- Ministry to inactive Catholics
- Parish resource centers that have videos, books, cassettes, and CDs available
- Faith sharing groups
- Study groups:
- Video-assisted learning, distance learning, and computer courses
- Audio and Teleconferences
- Guest speakers
- Theology night out: speaker, prayer, fellowship
- Parish newsletter, bulletin, website
- Film festivals
- Travel and pilgrimages
- Service projects
- Cultural celebrations and popular religious devotions

Source:

- Parish ministry
- Serving as sponsor in RCIA or as mentor to younger people
- Interdenominational experiences that promote social justice
- Mystagogy after significant life experiences
- Diocesan, regional, and national conferences
- Missionary projects in underdeveloped countries or areas in the U.S.
Mystagogical Catechesis for the Birth of a Child
Gathering of parents with child and family members

**Preparation:** Table with child’s birth certificate and pictures of the birth
   Bowl of water, flowers, Bible, and a candle

**Welcome and Prayer of Gathering**
**Song:** “You Are Near” by Dan Schutte or “Que Grande el Amor de Dios” (Spanish) by Juan B. Ortega
Recite Psalm 139

**Return to the experience:**
How did you prepare for your baby’s arrival?
Recall the trip to the hospital, the delivery room; the people that were there;
the delivery, pain, pushing and the child comes forth in blood and water.
The umbilical cord is cut, the baby cries, and is washed and wrapped in a blanket.
The child is placed in the mother’s arms/father’s arms. What was it like to hold your child, to see your baby?
What did you see, hear, touch, smell, and feel?
Remember when you were bringing the baby home. What were you thinking and feeling?
What is your strongest recollection and feeling of the whole experience?

**Reflect on its meaning:**
What does having a child mean to you? How does it feel to become a parent? What name have you given your child? What does the name mean to you? How has your life changed? What are your hopes and desires for your child?

**Recognize and relish the mystery in light of the Christian Story and Tradition:**
What have you discovered about God and God’s action in your lives?
How has God met you, revealed himself to you through this experience?
What stories in the Bible come to your mind as you reflect on the birth of your child?
What does our Catholic faith tell us about birth and life?

**I. The Christian Story:**
- God is the creator of all life: Genesis 1 and 2, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), nos. 279-314
- Human life is sacred: God created the human person in his own image (Genesis 1:27, Genesis 4:1-16, and CCC, no. 355)
- Dignity of the human person (Psalm 8 and Psalm 139, *Gaudium et Spes* (GS), nos. 12 and 24, CCC, nos. 356–368
- God entrusted all of creation to human beings and made them co-creators with God (Genesis 1: 26–28)
- Symbols of life: pain, blood and water, bursting from the darkness of the womb to the light in the world are symbols of the blood and water that flowed from the side of
Christ at the crucifixion; symbols of our redemption, of baptism, of our new life in Christ (John 19:31–34), Lumen Gentium (LG), no. 3

2. The Christian tradition
   - The Paschal mystery in our lives: we move from the pain of giving birth to receiving the child, a new life entrusted to our care; from death to life.
   - The Church, the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12: 12–14
   - New life in Baptism
   - The Church’s vision of Christian parents and the Christian family (GS, no. 41, Familiaris Consortio, nos. 14-15, 38)
   - The Role of the Christian family (Familiaris Consortio, nos. 17, 18, 26, 47-50, 52-54, 59-63)
   - The home as the domestic church (GS, no. 11, Familiaris Consortio, no. 21)
   - Mission of the Christian family beyond the home (Familiaris Consortio, nos. 52-63, 71)

Respond to the Mystery:

Community: What will be the role of your family members and the parish community in raising your child in the Catholic faith?
Catechesis: In what ways can you continue learning about God’s love and plan for you and your child?
Liturgy: How can prayer and the sacraments help you grow in your relationship with God?
Mission: What is God calling you to do now that you have encountered God in this experience?
          What do you consider to be your responsibility towards one another and towards your child?
          How will you promote life and witness to God’s love to others outside the home?

Closing remarks:
Invite parents to stay connected to God and the Christian community, to present their child for baptism in the Church; to witness to their faith by participating in the sacramental and pastoral life of the Church.

Prayer of Thanksgiving:
Recite a Prayer for Parents and ask parents to bless their child by making the Sign of the Cross over their child.

Gift: Leave a copy of a Prayer for Parents in a picture frame for the family home, or a picture or night light of the Guardian Angel, or of the Holy Family.
Mystagogical Catechesis for Matrimony of Two Baptized Catholics

Session One

Introductory Rites and Liturgy of the Word

Preparation: A table with the Bible, the marriage certificate, and pictures of the wedding: the entrance procession, entrance of the bride into the Church, the groom and best man waiting for her, the father entrusting his daughter to the groom, the couple listening to the Scripture readings and the homily, and any other pictures of this part of the liturgy.

Prayer:
Spontaneous gathering prayer
Scripture Reading: the Gospel the couple chose for their wedding liturgy

Return to the experience:
What and who did you see as you arrived at the Church? What did you hear? What did you feel when you saw each other at two ends of the Church?
Wife: What did you notice when you marched up the aisle with your father, (or another family member, if your father was not present)? How did you feel, when your father gave your hand to your soon-to-be husband? For the husband: What were you thinking and feeling as you waited, as you took her hand from her father?
Recall when the priest started the Mass, the words and gestures, your responses.

- Introductory Rites:
What words or images do you remember from the penitential rite and the opening prayer?

- Liturgy of the Word:
Sample readings:
First Reading: Genesis 2: 18-24 (The two of them become one body)
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 33: 12, 18, 20-21, 22 (the goodness of the Lord)
Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:31–13:8a (if I do not have love, I gain nothing)
Gospel: Matthew 22: 35-40 (the greatest commandments)
What came to your mind as you listened to the Scripture readings you chose for your wedding?
Do you remember any of the images of marriage in the readings?
What words did you hear in the homily that helped you recognize the action of God in the Scripture?
What message did you hear?

Reflect on its meaning:
Why did you choose the Scripture readings you chose for your liturgy?
What did they mean to you then? What do they mean to you now?
What does it mean for you to be married in the Church, in the presence of your relatives and friends?
Recognize and relish the mystery in light of the Christian Story and Tradition:

1. The Christian Story
   - How does God’s word in Scripture strengthen your decision to become husband and wife?
   - How does it invite you to open your hearts to living a new life in partnership with God?
   - What aspect, quality or image of God is most important for you to remember at this time in your lives?
   - Is there a story in Scripture that best describes how you are feeling as you begin walking together in your new commitment?
   - How can God’s Word in Scripture be considered a light for our path?

2. The Christian Tradition:
   Options: Importance and dignity of the Sacrament of Marriage: The Rites of the Catholic Church, vol. 1, “Rite of Marriage,” nos. 1-4
   
   Respond to the Mystery:
   You have experienced the love and mystery of God . . .
   Community: What kind of relationship is God inviting the two of you to develop in response to His word? What will help you to trust God more in your journey of faith together?
   Who are the people that you will rely on for support in your marriage?
   Catechesis: Come to know God better and grow in your relationship with God by reflection on His word in Scripture. Use the Bible that was given to you on your wedding day.
   Liturgy: How can you develop a habit of prayer in your home? What kinds of prayers and devotions of the Christian community mean the most to you and enable you to recognize God’s presence?
   Mission: How does being married affect how you will serve people in the community who need your love?
   
   Suggestion:
   Invite the couple to place the Bible in a place of honor, on a prayer table with other religious symbols, such as a candle, and to light the candle every time they use their Bible for prayer. Encourage them to pray together their favorite prayers or spontaneous prayers at a specific time of the day. You may want to suggest psalms or other prayers in the Bible that they can pray together.

   Closing Prayer: Ask the couple to take the Bible from the table, raise it up together, bow before it or kiss it in veneration, place it over each other’s heart, one at a time, and speak a prayer for each other as they do so, then return it to the table.

   Note: If the marriage is between a Catholic and a Non-Catholic, more time or more sessions may be needed and some adjustments may need to be made in the process.
Mystagogical Catechesis for Matrimony
Session Two
Rite of Marriage

Preparation:
A table with the picture of the couple exchanging their marriage vows

Prayer:
Ask the couple to join hands and look at the wedding rings on their fingers as they listen to the Scripture Reading (Jeremiah 31: 31-32a, 33-34).

Return to the Experience:
Review each part of the Rite of Marriage (nos. 23-29).
Recall your thoughts and feelings, the texture of each other’s hand as you held hands to pronounce your marriage vows, the look in each other’s eyes as you faced one another.
Recall the three questions that the priest asked you and your response.
What were you feeling as you spoke them and as you heard your spouse also respond?
What do you remember about taking each other’s hands and making your vows to one another for life?
Who brought the rings to be blessed?
Recall when the priest sprinkled holy water on them and blessed them. When you put the ring on each other’s finger and spoke the words, what were you feeling?
What other gifts did you receive? From whom?
What did you hear in the General Intercessions?
What was the prayer in your heart as you knelt down together as man and wife for the first time?

Reflect on its meaning:
Now that you are beginning to live your marriage vows, what does it mean to promise fidelity in freedom and openness to having children?
What do the rings symbolize for you?
What do the other gifts you received mean to you?
How is your life different now from what it was when you were single? Describe your schedule on an ordinary day, your activities and interactions with others. What are some of the changes being called forth from you to make marriage real in the day to day?
Recognize and relish the mystery in light of the Christian Story and Tradition:

1. The Christian Story
   - When did you know that God was present during your experience of the marriage rite?
   - What does promising to love one another forever show you about the mystery of God, about God’s love and faithfulness?
   - Do you recall any weddings in Scripture?
   
   Options: God loves us unconditionally: Isaiah 49: 14-16, John 3:16
   Marriage is a symbol of God’s love and faithfulness, covenant with His people, Jeremiah 31:31-32a, 33 – Does this Scripture passage have a deeper meaning now than when we started the session?
   Marriage is an indissoluble union: Genesis 2:18-24
   Marriage is a sacrament, symbol of union of Christ with the Church, 21-33: Ephesians 5:2a, Matthew 19: 3-6

2. The Christian Tradition
   CCC, nos. 2360-2365
   Marriage is an indissoluble union: Familiaris Consortio, nos. 11-20
   Of the married couples that you know in the community, how do you know when they are happily married?
   Review the significance of the gifts they received: the Bible, rosary
   In the Hispanic culture couple receive “arras” coins and are joined by a “lazo,” explain their meaning
   The unity candle
   The gesture of blessing from their parents

Respond to the Mystery:
Community: What will you do to become “one” rather than “two” in your marriage? For example, when you misunderstand or hurt one another?

Liturgy: Encourage the couple to take advantage of the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the grace of forgiveness and strength in their relationship.

Catechesis: How can you share Scripture to teach one another the meaning of love and fidelity?

Mission: How will you witness faithfulness and love for each other to other married couples, family, and friends?

Closing Prayer:
Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 10:16-17
Song: “We Are Many Parts” by Marty Haughen, GIA Publications
Mystagogical Catechesis for Matrimony  
Session Three  
Liturgy of the Eucharist and Dismissal

**Preparation:** Gather around the table in the dining room or kitchen. Place bread and wine, the Bible and a picture of the couple receiving Holy Communion, and receiving the Nuptial Blessing, Walking out of the church as husband and wife on the table.

**Opening Prayer:** Lord Jesus Christ, we worship you living among us in the sacrament of your body and blood. May we offer to our Father in heaven a solemn pledge of undivided love. May we offer to our brothers and sisters a life poured out in loving service of that Kingdom where you live with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (Alternate opening prayer for the Feast of Corpus Christi)

**Return to the experience:**
Recall the actions and words, feelings during the various parts of the liturgy of the eucharist: preparation of the gifts, the pouring of the wine into the cup, offering of the gifts and response, the Sanctus and the Eucharistic Prayer, the actions of the priest, taking the bread and wine, blessing them, breaking of the bread, the words of consecration of the bread of the wine, the Our Father, the sign of peace and the Lamb of God.
Remember when you received Holy Communion, your “Amen” when you were invited to receive the “body of Christ” and the “blood of Christ,” the taste and your feelings.
What did you hear and feel during The Nuptial Blessing?
What do you remember about the final blessing and dismissal at the end of the Mass?
What were you wondering and feeling as you turned to face your family and friends; as you were introduced for the first time as Mr. and Mrs.; as you walked down the aisle to leave the Church?

**Reflect on its meaning:** What symbols in the liturgy remind you of God’s love and concern for you individually and as a couple?
What was your silent prayer as you received Holy Communion?
What is your greatest desire for your marriage?
How does recalling your participation in this Eucharist strengthen you, challenge you when you are together and when you are apart?

**Recognize and relish the mystery in light of the Christian Story and Tradition:**

1. The Christian Story

   **Options:**
   - The Eucharist is God’s gift of self as you are gift to each other in words, actions, sexual union. It is sacramental sacrifice, thanksgiving, memorial, and presence, Mark 14: 22-26
   - The Eucharist is a nuptial sacrament: The wedding feast: Matthew 22-1-10, Luke 14:15-24,
   - The Eucharist is food for our journey, John 6: 21-5.
• Eucharist is an eschatological banquet, a sign of the life to come: Isaiah 25:6-9, Revelation 18:5-9.
• Eucharist prepares and sends us to mission. To participate in the Eucharist calls us to become bread for others, to be broken and shared, John 6:51.

2. The Christian Tradition
• How did God visit you in this Eucharist?
• What did you learn about the mystery of God’s relationship with you and your relationship with each other as we gathered at the table of the Lord?
• Read the words in the nuptial blessing. What do these words mean to you now? CCC, nos. 1356-1377
• How are the sacrifices you’re making for each other a sign of love? Sacramentum Caritatis, nos. 27 -28
• Food for the Journey; CCC, no. 1391-1396.
• Eschatological banquet, a sign of life to come: CCC, no. 1402-1405, Familiaris Consortio, no. 30, Sacramentum Caritatis, no. 31
• The dismissal at the end of the Mass sends us forth to mission, to participate in building the reign of God on earth. CCC, no. 1397, Called to Participate: Theological, Ritual, and Social Perspectives by Mark Searle (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2006), 68–84.

Respond to the mystery:
Community: When you gather for meals, how will your conversation nourish your relationship with each other? Which of your attitudes enable you to practice hospitality and which attitudes keep you from seeing others as your brothers and sisters? Who will be invited to share meals with you?

Liturgy: Now that God has come to you in the sacraments of matrimony and eucharist how will you participate actively in Sunday eucharist with the rest of the Christian community?

Catechesis: Invite the couple to learn more about Catholic social teaching

Mission: How will you share your bread with the hungry? How will you work to overcome hunger in our world?

Closing Prayer: Pray the Nuptial Blessing slowly then invite everyone to recite the “Prayer of St. Francis” as they share the bread and wine.
Mystagogical Catechesis on the Homily
Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Cycle B)

First Reading: 1 Kings 19:9a, 11-13a
Responsorial Psalm: 85: 9-10, 11-12, 13-14
Second Reading: Romans 9: 1-5
Gospel: Matthew 14:22-23

Opening Prayer: Matthew 14:22-23

Return to the Experience:
What was it like for you to be in the assembly on this particular Sunday?
Where in the assembly were you sitting and with whom? What was the atmosphere like in the church as you sat to listen to the homily? Did anything in particular catch your attention?
What was going through your mind as you listened to the homily? What words or phrases, images, and sounds from the Scripture did you hear the homilist focus on?
What did you feel as the homilist developed each part of his homily? after the homily?

Reflect on its Meaning:
How was God coming to you through the preaching of the Word?
How were you challenged, comforted, or convicted?
What message did you take home with you?

Recognize and Relish the Mystery in light of the Christian Story and Tradition:
Recalling the words, images, natural elements presented in the homily:
- What do the experiences of Elijah from the Old Testament and Peter from the Gospel teach you about your faith? about God? about God’s desire to be in relationship with you? about the Christian community?
- What experiences in your life resonate with their experiences?
- What questions do you have for the homilist about these Sunday readings?
- How can he enhance the meaning of these Scriptures from the Church’s Tradition for you to grow in your understanding of the mystery of God revealed in His word?
- Were you fed by the message proclaimed? Were you left hungry?

Respond to the Mystery
Community: How are you building up the faith in your parish community?
Liturgy: Now that God has come to you, how will that affect your openness to the Scripture readings, the homily, and your participation in the rest of the liturgy next Sunday?
Catechesis: What is the most important learning you want to share with the group from today’s reflection on the homily? Will you please teach someone you know what you learned today?
Mission: This week, how will you be a doer of the word, not just a hearer of the word?

Closing Prayer: Psalm 85:9, 10, 11-12, 13-1
Guide for the Catechist

Prior to the session:
- Explain briefly what mystagogy is and the steps in the mystagogical process.
- Invite the participants to prepare the prayer table for each session
- Pray and study the material, decide which of the options for catechesis you will use

Time: Each session may take from an hour and a half to two hours.

During the session:
- Be aware of God’s presence and the guidance of the Holy Spirit
- Guide the process gently and respectfully; tread lightly on participants’ experience
- Don’t rush
- Answer questions as best you can. If you don’t know how to answer some of the questions, offer to find out the answer and share it with them later

Options:
- Use whatever questions are helpful in each step of the process or pose your own questions that will assist people in their reflection and response
- The suggestions for catechesis are options for you to draw from, more than you can use in one session

After the session:
- Reflect on your learnings/insights from this experience
- Offer thanks to God for allowing you to be an instrument of his love and presence in people’s journey of faith
Guía para el Catequista

Antes de la reunión:
- Dé una explicación breve a los participantes de lo que es mistagogia y los pasos en el proceso mistagógico
- Invite a los participantes que preparen la mesa(altarcito) para cada reunión
- Ore y estudie el material, decida cual de las opciones para la catequesis va a utilizar

Tiempo: Cada reunión se toma de una hora y media a dos horas

Durante la reunión:
- Esté consiente de la presencia de Dios y la acción del Espíritu Santo
- Escuche a los participantes con mucha atención
- Guíe el proceso suavemente, respetando los sentimientos de los participantes
- No tenga prisa
- Responda a las preguntas de los participantes lo mejor que pueda. Si hay algunas que no puede contestar, dígales que va a buscar la respuesta y la compartirá con ellos más tarde

Opciones:
- Utilice cual quiera de las preguntas en cada paso del proceso que sean mas apropiadas o prepare sus propias preguntas
- Las sugerencias para la catequesis son solamente opciones de las cuales puede escoger, más que lo que puede cubrir en una reunión. Use lo que sea útil o escoge sus propios recursos

Después de la reunión:
- Reflexione sobre lo que aprendió de esta experiencia
- Ofrezca gracias a Dios por concederle ser un instrumento de Su amor y presencia en la jornada de fe de otras personas
Closing Prayer

Leader: May almighty God, who has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit generously bless all of us who are his faithful children. May we always live as his people, and may he bless all here present with his peace. *(Rite of Baptism for Several Children, no. 70.)*

All: Amen

Sprinkling rite:
Background music: “Water of Life/Agua de Vida” by Jaime Cortez, OCP Publications

*Canticle of the Baptized* (alternate sides)

Praise be to you Lord,  
for all of creation that glorifies your name, mountains, rivers, trees, and birds.
Praise be to you, Lord,  
for the wind and the rain, the night and the day, the sun, the moon and the stars.
Praise be to you Lord, who form us in your image and calling us each by name.  
and whose spirit inflames our hearts  
and urges us to love and serve one another.
Praise be to you Lord, who guide our footsteps in ways of peace and justice.  
Praise be to you Lord, for sending us your Son  
whose death and resurrection has given us new life.
Praise be to you Lord, for sending your Spirit to move over the waters  
that fills our rivers and nourishes all living things.
Praise be to you Lord, for making us your own sons and daughters  
through water and light in Baptism.
Praise be to you Lord,  
for washing away our sins in these life-giving waters.
Praise be to you Lord, for making us one family as we rise from the waters.
Praise be to you Lord, for anointing us with the chrism of salvation,  
the oil of gladness and strength.
Praise be to you Lord,  
for the light of faith entrusted to our parents and godparents.
Praise be to you Lord  
for making us your priests, prophets, and kings of the new covenant.
Praise be to you Lord, for gathering us around your table  
and feeding us with your body and your blood in the forms of bread and wine.
Praise be to you Lord, for sending us forth into the world by the power of your Spirit.
Praise be to you Lord, for companions on our journey through this world  
that leads us back to you. Praise be to you!

*(By Sister Guadalupe Ramirez, MCDP)*
Blessing and Sending Forth:

Leader: My brothers and sisters, we entrust you all to the mercy and help of God the almighty Father, his only Son, and the Holy Spirit. May he watch over your life, and may we walk by the light of faith, and attain the good things he has promised us. And may almighty God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit bless you. (Rite of Baptism for Several Children, no. 70.)

All: Amen.

Leader: Go in peace.

All: Thanks are to God.

*Closing Song: Somos El Cuerpo de Cristo/We are the Body of Christ

Refrain:
Somos el cuerpo de Cristo, We are the body of Christ.  
Hemos oído el llamado. We’ve answered “yes” to the call of the Lord.  
Somos el cuerpo de Cristo, We are the body of Christ.  
Traemos su santo mensaje. We come to bring the good news to the world.

Dios viene al mundo através de nosotros, We are the body of Christ.  
God is revealed when we love one another.  
Al mundo a cumplir la misión de la iglesia. We are the body of Christ.  
Bringing the light of God’s mercy to others, We are the body of Christ.

Cada persona es parte del reino; We are the body of Christ.  
Putting a stop to all discrimination.  
Todas las razas que habitan la tierra, We are the body of Christ.  
All invited to feast in the banquet.

Nuestras acciones reflejan justicia, We are the body of Christ.  
Stopping abuse and relieving the hungry.  
Vamos al mundo a cuidar su rebaño; We are the body of Christ.  
Serving each other we build up the kingdom.

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* (Each participant receives a candle as the song is sung.)
A.3  
Group One  
Mystagogical Catechesis for the Washing of the Feet: ACTS Retreat

Preparation: a table with a Bible, pitcher of water, basin, towel

Welcome and Introduction: Sr. Lupe Ramirez  (5 min.)

Opening Prayer: Song: “Gather Us In” by Marty Haugen  (10 min.)
Scripture Reading: John 13, 1-17  Berny Klapuch
Prayer by Thomas Merton  Led by Berny

Return to the Experience: Joann Garza  (10 min)
- When did you make your ACTS retreat?
- What were you feeling when the service began? not knowing what was going to happen?
- What did you see, hear, smell?
- What touched you the most?
- Where did you feel the strongest presence of Jesus?
- What was happening that made you feel this way?
- Return to all the actions: the reading from the Gospel of John, women in white robes taking off your socks, your shoes, leading you to the water; someone washing your feet, hearing the water poured then falling on your feet, the drying with a towel, kissing of the feet, being led back to your place, shoes and socks being put on and a pin on your blouse (women)
- Remember the faces of the women/men there, those who were serving as well as those who were being served, their faces, love, sobs, tears, soft music, reassuring words, the darkness of the night, the soft light.

Reminder on Rules for faith sharing: Berny  (2 min.)

Reflect on the Meaning: Janie Melchor  (15 min.)
Silent reflection and small group sharing (distribute one question at a time)
1. Why did Jesus wash the feet of the Apostles?
2. Reflect on the meaning of having your feet washed at the ACTS Retreat: What does it tell you about yourself? About God? About the Christian community?

Recognize and Relish the Mystery in light of the Christian Story and Tradition:  
(Sr. Lupe and Deacon John Klapuch)
What does it mean for Jesus to wash the feet of the Apostles?  
How is the mystery of God experienced through this event?
Significance of Foot-washing within Judaism:

1. Hospitality and welcome to enter a house – Abraham (Gen. 18: 4)
2. Cultic purpose – required to enter the temple
3. Hygiene and comfort
   Two aspects: house and temple

Foot-washing for Jesus:
- Sign of unconditional love, not just humility and service
- Jesus lays down his clothing, washes the feet, takes up his clothing
- The Good Shepherd who freely lays down his life for his sheep then takes it up again
- Symbol of the Cross: Fullness of Love
- Mystery: Experience of love transcends service and duty, brings about transformation
- Deeper meaning: Jesus gathers his own, gives them power to become children of God, members of his household, the household of God, relationship of intimacy, trust, friendship
  Johannine community perceived itself as “the household of God.”
- There may be different roles and functions but all are equal in the Father’s household, have the same intimate relationship Jesus has with the Father, Son of God.
- We are made brothers and sisters of Christ and of one another Jesus enacts a loving welcome into the Father’s household that will be accomplished at the Cross through simple, homely, foot-washing
- Disciples will understand the true meaning of this action after Jesus’ resurrection

Foot-washing in the Christian Tradition: Deacon John
- We are welcomed into the household of God when we are baptized, washed in the waters of life, new birth
- Where in our liturgy is this ceremony/ritual re-enacted? On Holy Thursday, the beginning of the Triduum.
- Have you ever had your feet washed on Holy Thursday or washed someone else’s feet?
- How is this gesture connected to the rest of the Eucharist?
- Institution of Holy Eucharist, new and eternal covenant: “This is my body; This is my blood - Institution of the Christian priesthood (“do this in memory of me”)
- Sign of unity, exchange of love, Christ’s gift of Himself to us in Holy Communion, a call and the food for transformation
- At the end of every Mass we are sent to wash the feet of others. Offer hospitality to all of our brothers and sisters, service, love as Christ loves
- The Holy Thursday liturgy concludes with adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: watch and pray in preparation for Christ’s passion and death, makes possible the household of God
Small group sharing: (15 min.)
1. Have you ever “washed a loved one’s feet,” physically or figuratively, when they were unable to do so? How did it feel and what did it mean for you?
2. Has anyone ever ministered to you in your need, “washed your feet”? How did it feel and what did it mean to you?

Quiet Reflection: song on CD: “The Basin and a Towel” by Michael Card (5 min.)

BREAK (team distributes cups of water with a lid) (15 min.)

Respond to the Mystery: Janie Melchor (20 min)
Small group reflection and sharing

Questions on handout for private written response first, then each person shares their response to one or two of the questions

How will your life be different because of this encounter with God?
Community: After experiencing God’s unconditional love, how can this love flow over into your relationships with family, friends, co-workers, parish community?

Liturgy: How will you nurture your relationship with God through prayer and participation in the Sunday eucharist and liturgical feasts, Holy Week, the prayer life of the Church?

Catechesis: How will you learn more about the implications for welcoming all people into the household of God? Attitudes or behaviors that you have to change?

Mission: How will you answer God’s invitation to participate in the parish community and Jesus’ mission to love through hospitality and service? As you move forward, how is this experience challenging you to go beyond your comfort zone in your service to the parish and the larger community even beyond ACTS?

Invite comments from participants on this experience: Sr. Lupe (10 min.)
Closing comments: Mystagogy: interpreting the mystery of God in Sacramental life after the experience to discover the deeper meanings that lead people to deeper conversion into Christ. Everyone is invited everyone to participate in all of the Holy Week and Easter celebrations.

Closing Prayer/Ritual: Deacon John (15 min)
- Participants pour their cup of water into the large bowl
- Then participants fill their cup from the water in the bowl that represents all of the community.
- Participants take the cup home and wash the feet of someone in their household, or a neighbor, a friend, a stranger, or someone they have trouble welcoming into the Father’s house (explain to that person what and why you are doing this – a sign of your own conversion and desire to love as Christ loves, unconditionally.)
• Songs during the ritual: “Servant Song” by Richard Gillard, “Dwelling Place” by John Foley SJ, and “Fill my House” by Peter Kearney
• Final Blessing by Deacon John
• Closing Song: “They’ll Know We Are Christians” by Peter Scholtes

Total time: Two hours and thirty-two minutes  Time-keeper: Janie
Musicians: Sam Melchor, Liz Christian, Sr. Lupe
Hospitality: Liz Christian & Lupe Saldaña; water, drinks, and paper goods: ACTS; cheese & crackers: John, Berny, and Joann;
chips & dips: Liz & Pat Brennan; fruit: Sam & Janie
Catequesis Mistagógica para el Lavatorio de Pies
Retiro de ACTS

Preparación: una mesa con la Biblia, un jarro de agua, una jofanía, y una toalla

Bienvenida e introducción: Sr. Lupe Ramírez (5 min.)

Oración de Apertura: Lectura: Juan 13:1–17 Diacono Alfonso Moreno, (10 min.)
Canto: “Amar” (tradicional) Olivia Moreno, y Abel Asencio

Retorne a la experiencia: Abel (10 min.)
- ¿Cuándo vivió su retiro de ACTS?
- ¿Qué emociones sintió usted cuando empezó esta experiencia? Sin saber lo que iba a suceder, ¿Qué vió, escuchó, olió? ¿Qué le afectó más?
- ¿Dónde sintió la más fuerte presencia de Jesús? ¿Qué estaba sucediendo que lo hizo sentirse así?
- Recuerde todo la escena y acciones: mujeres vestidas de blanco, la lectura del evangelio de San Juan, la música, velas encendidas, hoyas de agua.
- Alguien le quitó los calcetines y los zapatos, lo llevó de la mano al sitio, oyó y sintió el agua que caía sobre sus pies, alguien le lavó los pies, besaron sus pies, le secaron los pies con la toalla, lo llevaron a su asiento y le pusieron sus calcetines y sus zapatos.
- ¿Qué vio en los rostros de todas esas personas que le estaban sirviendo así y que pensó, sintió?

Revista de reglas para discusión en grupos pequeños: Sr Lupe (2 min.)

Reflexione sobre el significado: Abel (10 min.)
(Dialogo en grupos pequeños).
1. ¿Qué aprendió de esta experiencia sobre quién es usted? ¿Quién es Jesús? ¿Qué es la comunidad cristiana?
2. ¿Cómo llegó Dios a usted por medio de esta experiencia?

Reconozca y saboree el misterio a la luz de la historia y tradición cristiana: (30 min.)
(Sr. Lupe y Diacono Alfonso)
¿Por qué les lavó Cristo los pies a sus apóstoles?
¿Cómo se revela el misterio de Dios por medio de esta acción?

La Historia Cristiana: el significado del lavatorio de pies (Sr. Lupe)
En la tradición judía, y para Cristo

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La Tradición Cristiana: Diacono Alfonso

- ¿Dónde en la liturgia cristiana se celebra este acontecimiento? El jueves santo, semana santa
- ¿Le han lavado los pies a usted durante el Jueves Santo o le lavado usted los pies a alguien?
- ¿Cómo se relaciona esta acción al resto de la liturgia? ¿Con la liturgia eucarística?
- Durante esta liturgia también se celebra la institución de la eucaristía: “Este es mi cuerpo. Esta es mi sangre…” Y la institución del sacerdocio: “Hagan esto en memoria mía.” Símbolos de unidad, intercambio de amor, el regalo de Cristo en la santa comunión es una invitación a la conversión y transformación en su cuerpo
- Ordinariamente, al final de la misa somos enviados a lavarles los pies a los demás, a nuestros hermanos y hermanas. ¿Cómo hacemos esto?
- Pero esta noche, se nos invita a velar con Cristo, de adorar al Santísimo; a mantenernos despertados y orar en preparación para la pasión y muerte de Cristo, la obra que hace posible el establecimiento de la familia de Dios
- En nuestra cultura hispana repartimos el pan bendito para que se comparta con los familiares enfermos u otros que no pudieron participar en la liturgia. También visitamos siete iglesias para unirnos con otras comunidades en adoración del Santísimo, símbolo de unidad

Dialogo en grupos pequeños: Abel

1. ¿Le ha lavado usted los pies a un ser querido cuando el/ella no lo podía hacer? ¿Cómo se sintió y que significaba esta acción para usted?
2. ¿Le ha lavado alguien los pies a usted, actualmente o un gesto inesperado de caridad cuando usted se encontraba en necesidad? ¿Cómo se sintió y que significación tuvo esta experiencia?

DESCANSO (equipo distribuye las tazas de agua con una tapa) (15 min.)

Responda al misterio: Teresa de León (20 min.)

(Se comparte la respuesta a una o dos de las preguntas en grupo pequeño)

Comunidad: ¿Cómo va a responder a la llamada de Dios a participar más activamente en la comunidad, a brindar hospitalidad a todos sin distinción, recibiéndolos como hermanos y hermanas en Cristo?

Liturgia: ¿Qué va a cambiar en su oración personal y en su participación en la misa dominical, fiestas litúrgicas como semana santa y domingo de pascua para poder vivir como seguidor/a de Cristo?

Catequesis: ¿Cómo va a aprender más sobre las implicaciones de dar la bienvenida a todas personas a la familia de Dios? a reconocer actitudes o comportamientos que necesitan cambiar?

Misión: ¿En qué manera va a participar en la misión de Cristo más allá de ACTS? Al seguir adelante, que desafío le presenta esta experiencia de hoy?
Invitar comentarios de los participantes sobre esta experiencia: Sr. Lupe  (10 min.)
Comentarios finales: Mistagogia, descubriendo el misterio de Dios en las experiencias/rituales sacramentales
Todos están invitados a participar en todas las liturgias de Semana Santa y de la Pascua, el tiempo central de todo el año litúrgico

Oración de clausura:  
(15 min.)
- Explicación: Sr. Lupe
- Cada persona vacía su taza de agua en la jofaina, el agua se mezcla con el agua de los demás, y luego pasan y llenan sus tazas de nuevo; son invitados a llevar ese agua a sus casas y usarlo para lavarle los pies a un pariente, vecino, o a una persona que se les hace difícil aceptar como hermana/hermano, explicándoles la razón porque le está brindando este gesto de hospitalidad y servicio.
- Cantos: “Un Mandamiento Nuevo” (Carlos Rosas)
  “Bendigamos al Señor” (tradicional)
- Bendición: Diacono Alfonso
- Canto: “Juntos Como Hermanos” (Cesario Gibarían)

Refrigerios: mujeres de ACTS
Músicos: Sam Melchor y Sr. Lupe
A.4  Group Two

DRAFT: Mystagogical Catechesis for Confirmation
With the parents and sponsors of newly confirmed students

**Preparation:** A Prayer Table with pictures of students being confirmed or of the group after Confirmation, bible, and candle

**Welcome and explanation of the process**

**Opening Prayer:** Use the Entrance song from the Confirmation liturgy or “By the Waking of our Hearts” by Ricky Manalo: OCP, and a prayer to the Holy Spirit
Divide into two groups: one with the students, the other with parents and sponsors. Develop a process for each group; For parents and sponsors:

**Return to the Experience:**
- What did you see, hear, feel during the Entrance Procession and song; when you saw your son/daughter come down the middle aisle with their class, the bishop and liturgical ministers?
- Recall the lectors, images, stories in the Scripture readings. What was the strongest message you heard in the homily?
- During the Rite of confirmation: Prayer of the bishop with hands extended, Calling by a saint’s name, anointing with oil, the words, sign of peace, the sponsor laying his/her hand on the your son’s/daughter’s shoulder. What did you see on your son’s/daughter’s face when they returned to their pew? How were you feeling? What were you thinking?
- What were your strongest thoughts and feelings during the rest of the liturgy? Were any moments especially significant for you?

**Reflect on the Meaning:**
- What does it mean for you to have a son/daughter confirmed in the Catholic Church?
- What does it say to you about who God is and what you believe? About your relationship with God, about who you are as parents, as sponsors? What does it tell you about the parish community?
- Did it remind you of your own Confirmation? Your age, the place, the feelings? What did it mean for you then? What does it mean for you now?
- What does the ritual of anointing with oil in the sign of the cross mean for you?
- How was participation in your son/daughter’s confirmation an experience of God for you? When and how was God most present to you?

**Recognize and relish the mystery in light of the Christian Story and Tradition:**
- Are you aware of the action of the Holy Spirit in your life? What are some of the ways that the Holy Spirit acts in your daily life?
The Christian Story:

Options:
- Do you recall any Scripture stories or events that mention the Holy Spirit?
- The presence and work of the Holy Spirit: Creation story in Genesis 1
- Anointing with oil: Old Testament: Anointing of King David, special call: I Samuel 1–16
  New Testament: Jesus is anointed at Bethany: Matt 26: 6–13
- The formation and witness of the Christian community: Acts 2:43–47
- How do we know that the Holy Spirit is among us? The gifts of the Holy Spirit: Isaiah 11:1–5; Isaiah 42:1–4; 1 Cor. 12:1–11; the fruits of the Holy Spirit: Gal. 5:22–26

The Christian Tradition:
- Catholics begin and end all prayers with the Sign of the Cross: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- What are other times in which oil is used in the Church? For what purpose? Baptism, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders
- The Saints throughout the ages allowed themselves to be open, to listen to the Holy Spirit and to act according to the guidance of the Spirit. Who is your favorite Saint? Why? Has your son/daughter, godson/god-daughter shared with you why he/she chose the saint he/she chose for confirmation? If he/she hasn’t, ask him/her to do so.
- How do we recognize the voice and action of the Holy Spirit? personal prayer, Scripture, liturgy and sacraments, life experiences, community, discernment and Spiritual Direction (use a handout)
- What are the voices that may interfere with the voice of the Spirit? How can you resist them?

Respond to the Mystery:
(Use a hand out with the questions and space for responses, distribute cards)

Community: What gifts of the Holy Spirit or interests do you have that you can share with the community in a ministry, parish organization, special occasions/ activities, etc?

Liturgy: How can you nurture an attitude of listening to the Holy Spirit during Sunday liturgy in order for you to make good decisions in your family, work, other relationships, parish and community? Especially in your relationship with your son/daughter/ godson/god-daughter?
Catechesis: How will you learn more about the Holy Spirit and being led by the Spirit?

Mission: Where in your community or in society do you see the Spirit’s presence? Absence? What gift or fruit of the Spirit will you practice as a witness to your faith in your continual following of the Spirit’s lead? How will you help your son/daughter to listen and trust the voice of the Spirit in his/her life? To recognize his/her gifts, affirm them, and learn to share them with others?

Choose one from the above options that you plan to do and will share with your son/daughter, godson/goddaughter and write it on a card

Return to large group: Students sit in small groups with parents and sponsors

Closing Prayer:
- Prayer of listening while holding their cell phone (turned off) in the palm of their hand
- Comment: just as the cell phone has to be turned on in order for us to call and receive calls from others, so also does the ear of our heart need to be turned on listen to the voice of the Spirit
- Students share one thing they are going to do to live by the Spirit, parents and sponsors share one thing they are going to do to live by the Spirit
- Students thank parents and sponsors for their help in the past, ask for their help in the future Parents and sponsors share one gift of the Spirit they see in their son/daughter, godson, god-daughter, bless students, express their love for them and their desire to support and assist them in their continued journey of faith
- Students receive their Confirmation certificate
- Sign of Peace
- Closing song: “We Are Called” by David Haas

Conclusion: Refreshments
B.1 Mystagogy and On-Going Adult Faith Formation
Workshop Evaluation Form

1. Was the material presented in the workshop relevant to the topic?
   Code: 4 - extremely relevant; 3 - relevant; 2 - somewhat relevant; 1 - not relevant
   Please state the reason for your response.
   a. ___ Meaning and purpose of mystagogy
   b. ___ Historical background of mystagogy
   c. ___ Elements in mystagogy
   d. ___ Steps in the mystagogical process
   e. ___ Models of post-baptismal mystagogy
   f. ___ Adult faith development
   g. ___ Church’s vision and task of adult faith formation
   h. ___ Ideas/programs for adult faith formation
   i. ___ Examples of mystagogy as a method for on-going adult faith formation

   Comment:_________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

2. Was the process for agreeing on your three ways/experiences for mystagogy effective?
   __ extremely effective    ___ effective    ___ somewhat effective    ___ not effective

   Comment:  ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

3. Review the stated learning objectives for this workshop and describe how one was met in each of the categories
   a. Understanding: # ___
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

   b. Knowledge: #___
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

180
c. Able to: #___
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

4. Are there any objectives that were not met? If so, which ones?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

5. To what extent did your understanding and knowledge of mystagogy grow from what it was prior to the workshop to what it is now at the end of the workshop?
   ___ great extent    ___ good extent    ___ some extent    ___ small extent

   Comment:
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

6. What is the most import learning/insight that you are taking with you from this workshop?
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

7. Rate the facilitator/presenter’s competency in the following areas.
   Code: 4- extremely competent, 3- competent, 2-somewhat competent, 1-needs improvement
   a. ___ Designing the workshop
      (content, activities, organization of the schedule, time)
   b. ___ Giving directions
   c. ___ Conveying information clearly
   d. ___ Demonstrating knowledge of the material being presented or discussed
   e. ___ Facilitating the small and large group discussions
   f. ___ Responding to questions and concerns of participants

   Comment:
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

181
Mistagogia y la Formación de Fe Continua de Adultos

Evaluación del Taller

1. ¿Qué tan pertinente estuvo el material presentado al tema del taller?
   Código: 4-sumamente pertinente; 3-pertinente; 2- mas o menos pertinente; 1- no pertinente. Por favor explique la razón por su respuesta.
   a. ___ lo significante y el intento de mistagogia
   b. ___ el desarrollo histórico de mistagogia
   c. ___ los elementos en mistagogia
   d. ___ los pasos del proceso de mistagogia
   e. ___ los modelos de mistagogia postbautismal
   f. ___ el desarrollo de fe de adultos
   g. ___ la visión y responsabilidad de la iglesia de formar adultos en la fe
   h. ___ ideas/programas para la formación de fe de adultos
   i. ___ ejemplos de mistagogia como método para formar a adultos en la fe

2. ¿Fue eficiente el proceso para llegar a un acuerdo sobre las tres ideas/experiencias de mistagogia para su parroquia?
   Código: 4- sumamente eficiente; 3-eficiente; 2- mas o menos eficiente; 1-no eficiente
   Explique la razón por su respuesta.

3. Repase los objetivos para este taller y describa como se realizó uno de ellos en cada categoría
   a. Entendimiento: # ___
      ____________________________________________________________
      ____________________________________________________________
      ____________________________________________________________

   b. Conocimiento: # ___
      ____________________________________________________________
      ____________________________________________________________
      ____________________________________________________________

   c. Poder hacer: # ___
      ____________________________________________________________
      ____________________________________________________________
4. ¿Cuáles de los objetivos no se realizaron?

_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

5. Que tanto creció su entendimiento y conocimiento de mistagogia de lo que era antes del taller a lo que es al final del taller?

___ gran crecimiento  ___ buen crecimiento  ___ mas o menos crecimiento;
___ poco crecimiento

Comentario: ____________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

6. Que es lo más significante que usted se lleva con si de este taller?

_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

7. Calcule la competencia de la facilitadora/presentadora del taller y explique su respuesta.
Código: 4-sumamente competente; 3- competente; 2-mas o menos competente; 1- necesita mejorar

a. ___ Preparando el diseño del taller
   (temas, contenido, dinámicas, organización del horario, tiempo)
b. ___ Dando direcciones
c. ___ Compartiendo información claramente
d. ___ Mostrando conocimiento del material presentado o discutido
e. ___ Facilitando los grupos pequeños y el grupo grande
f. ___ Respondiendo a las preguntas e inquietudes de los participantes

Comentarios:
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

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### Mystagogy and On-Going Adult Faith Formation
#### Results of Workshop Evaluations

**Question #1: Was the material presented in the workshop relevant to the topic?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4 extremely relevant</th>
<th>3 relevant</th>
<th>2 somewhat relevant</th>
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<tr>
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<th>Group 1</th>
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<tr>
<td>a. Meaning &amp; purpose of mystagogy</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>8 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Historical background of mystagogy</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Elements in mystagogy</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Steps in mystagogical process</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>3 2 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. Models of post-baptismal mystagogy</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>7 3 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. Adult faith development</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>10 7 5 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>g. Church’s vision/task of Adult formation</td>
<td>4 3 2 1</td>
<td>7 4 8 1</td>
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h. Ideas/program for adult faith formation

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<td>Group 2</td>
<td>5</td>
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i. Examples of mystagogy for on-going Adult Faith Formation

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<td>Group 2</td>
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Group 1 – Comments:
- *Creo que es lo ideal para formar en la fe.*
- Didn’t know what mystagogy meant until explained very clearly
- All materials presented were/are extremely relevant to the topic.
- From the pre-workshop readings to the workshop itself all was informative, backed up by books, traditions, and history and pertinent to our community’s desire to grow.
- Sister Lupe was very well prepared and handled each component to the workshop adequately
- Very informative and well-organized, very useful and practical handouts
- Excellent transition through the topics – each flowed to the next well – culminating in choices that are very appropriate to our community

Group 2 – Comments:
- Sister Lupe did a good job of staying on topic
- All in all I found the workshop informative and explained some direction in my purpose as a lay person.
- Most of the material presented was relevant to the topic. I think it is the case because the material presented was qualitative and brought what and how our church can utilize mystagogy.
- Workshop was very helpful in understanding mystagogy.
- We must be good example of the teaching.
- You presented the workshop very well- organized to be able to take in and savor – I like the fact that there will be a follow-up soon on this workshop to begin the process of our learning experience to incorporate mystagogy w/in the church and its needs.
- I felt the handouts, the materials were “in depth” helped me see how I can add more to our program – reach more adults – continue process of adult formation.
- It gave me a better understanding in the process of mystagogy and the importance of it so that our Catholic faith can become stronger in the hearts of our community.
- The material that was presented for each topic is very well connected to it. I got to understand things about mystagogy that I did not understand before.
- To have programs going to keep persons renewed in their commitment to Christ.
• All materials, though many, were needed for explanation and better understanding.
• Liked the examples for a frame of reference – a good starting point to begin to ponder how our parish will begin this journey.
• With the knowledge of mystagogy I can practice this in my parish as a leader, to help my fellow parishioners, and myself, grow stronger in faith.

Question #2: Was the process for agreeing on your three ways/experiences for mystagogy effective?

__ 4 extremely effective __ 3 effective __ 2 somewhat effective __1 not effective

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<td>Group 1</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>4</td>
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Group 1 – Comments:
Very effective
• ability to sit together in open communication allowed the choices to be made

Effective
• As it comes after a long day, I was feeling fatigued and somewhat burdened.
• Directions for the process were, at first, unclear and required repeating.
• I think we got it right.

Group 2 – Comments:
Extremely effective
• posting the ideas/charts of mystagogy for everyone to see was useful
• Very effective. It was like we all could see where we were most needed in the community
• All of the material was thorough and helpful. This will be easier to understand and implement
• There was good discussion on the final three that were chosen.

Effective
• We are all greed on the three topics after much discussion based on the need of our church
• The discussion allowed participants to voice ideas and opinions.
• Four elements, catechist, faith development, community
• For a beginning, it was effective – there were just too many experiences to draw from – everyone’s input was worth mentioning – but everyone is different – let’s start with these.
• There are many options – it is difficult to choose to know what is more needed.
• Sitting down and having group come up with practical examples, discussing which ideas were relevant and possible to do made the experience effective and gave us a way to proceed from here with the knowledge gained from the workshop.

Somewhat effective

1. I think could use more time to be effective on the mystagogy

**Question # 3: Review the learning objectives for this workshop and describe how one was met in each of the categories:**

**Stage Two: Understanding and Knowledge**

**Learning objectives:**

Participants will understand:

1. **The meaning of mystagogy and its role in the Christian Initiation of Adults.**

   Group 1  0
   Group 2  1

   Group 2 – Comments:
   • To get the person in the church to understand the meaning of mystagogy.

2. **That the steps in a mystagogical process can lead people to continuing conversion and growth in faith.**

   Group 1  4
   Group 2  3

   Group 1 – Comments:
   • Through the steps in the mystagogical process can lead people to continuing conversion and growth in faith
   • The steps in the mystagogical process showed how the continuity & growth in faith was met by following the four steps which are community, liturgy, catechesis, and mission. Stages involve & practicing the faith.
   • How we are community and within have our own experiences of God.

   Group 2 – Comments:
   • I better understand how the proper steps in the mystagogy process can help adults stay and keep growing in our faith.
   • Helping us to understand the mystery of God and to see how this will help us to grow in our faith – in our trials of daily life/ life’s storms
• That if we really seek God, through the mystagogy process and relate it to a daily life experience, we can grow and help others to grow in faith with Christ.

3. The inter-relationship of the elements in mystagogy.

Group 1 0
Group 2 2

Group 2 – Comments:
• Reminded me about how we are many parts but one body – I know that the mystagogy are all inter-related.
• Community, liturgy, mission & catechesis is a true overall involvement to mystagogy in our church.

4. That faith development is a life-long process.

Group 1 2
Group 2 2

Group 1 – Comments:
• Faith is not a goal but an on-going process.
• Sacramental experiences thus are not an end but a milestone.

Group 2 – Comments:
• Sr. Lupe consistently described how faith development is a “process” and not a program.
• Faith is something that we all experience in our lives every day, to be reminded and how that is a life-long process is very helpful in understanding our journey here on earth.

5. That the Church has taken seriously its responsibility for forming adults in the Catholic faith

Group 1 2
Group 2 0

Group 1 – Comments:
• Shown through the many documents presented by the Church through the years
• Sr. Lupe explained convincingly that we the Church have NOT paid sufficient attention to adult formation in the past, but are beginning to do so now.

6. The importance of discovering opportunities for on-going adult faith formation then planning and implementing them.

Group 1 1
Group 2 3

Group 1 – Comments:
• When opportunities for mystagogy were identified and realizing the endless opportunities to put mystagogy into practice in and outside the church walls

Group 2 – Comments
• Opportunities how this can continue to be on-going in more than just the RCIA group
• It was eye-opening to realize that while established programs work, there is still opportunity for growth long-term (and it is important).
• The exercise and discussion on the different experiences that may have or make an opportunity for on-going adult education or faith formation

7. The potential in mystagogy for on-going adult faith formation

Group 1 1
Group 2 1

Group 1 – Comment:
• I think using the mystagogy for on-going adult faith formation really touches the human experience this helps tremendously like spiritual direction.

Group 2 – Comment:
• The potential of mystagogy can bring our church closer – we can share experiences to help us grow in faith, strength, and love.
Participants will have some knowledge of:

Learning Objectives:

1. The historical development of mystagogy

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Group 2 – Comments:
- That there is so much to know about the historically meaning of mystagogy
- Knowing what mystagogy really means and its purpose is important in one’s process of learning, but more in helping out with their struggle of learning-becoming close to the faith and to God.

2. The four elements in mystagogy

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Group 1 – Comments:
- Shown through the use of hula hoops so each different element, and how through each are overlapping in relation to the other
- The four elements in mystagogy, community- getting the community involved, liturgy –inviting them to join and attend Mass, teaching them the faith and serving or visiting them at home or inviting them to the church to gather together

Group 2 – Comments:
- I had done this before, but did not know it had an actual term. I understand and know now- that I can use mystagogy with any experience because our lives have God in them; we are spiritual beings experiencing a human experience.
- I will utilize all of the elements when preparing my RCIA lessons for the adults
- The elements that were used – liturgy, breaking open the word, community, get involved, mission. We expect catechists to grow more in the Catholic faith.
- The four elements in mystagogy were used throughout the workshop and used during the different exercises.
3. The steps in the process for mystagogical reflection

Group 1  1  
Group 2  1

Group 1 – Comment:
• Understanding the steps in the process for mystagogical reflection helps a person not only to grow their own faith but helps that person touch another as God would have us do.

Group 2 – Comment:
• Learning how to approach mystagogical reflection was taught effectively and will be beneficial to our church.

4. Effective models for implementing post-baptismal mystagogy

Group 1  1  
Group 2  1

Group 1- Comment:
• Effective models for implementing post-baptismal mystagogy

Group 2 – Comment:
• The handout allowed me to see each element and how they are inter-related.

5. The church’s vision, task, and efforts in forming adults in the faith

Group 1  0  
Group 2  1

Group 2 – Comment:
• When they see what the Church’s vision is, tasks, and efforts to reach out and help: to understand God’s love and forgiveness and help them to implement it in their daily life

6. Mystagogy as a viable model for on-going adult faith formation

Group 1  4  
Group 2  3
Group 1 – Comments:
- How mystagogy allows one to reflect on our own experiences of God. Relive the experiences and come to understanding where to go from here.
- Orienting the formation process to mystagogy allows us to use the universality of Christianity in a way that is individually tailored to each person.
- When properly understood, great potential can result. The general population needs to be educated that mystagogy is not just an RCIA term but an every term!
- Sister led us through an investigative process whereby we UNCOVERED numerous potential pastoral opportunities for mystagogy in an adult education context.

Group 2 – Comments
- Now I realize that there are many opportunities for mystagogy within our church that needs to begin.
- It is viable for us as a community to reach out and interact, care and love all our brothers and sisters so that they may not feel alone and may be encouraged to carry on so that we may all continue to learn.
- The continual metamorphosis is the key to our holiness.

Stage Three: Assessment Evidence:

Participants will be able to:

1. Describe the purpose, elements, and process in mystagogy

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<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
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</table>

Group 1 – Comments:
- Describe the purpose, elements, and process in mystagogy
- Awesome handouts, examples, questions, answer, process

Group 2 – Comments:
- I feel this experience has launched yet another avenue to serve God.
- After this session I have a better understanding of the importance of mystagogy after the rites in the RCIA and also I know how to help catechumens stay and grow in their faith.
- The process should begin and continue as a life-long process.
• The reason to have a mystagogy, process to develop faith formation. The elements for mystagogy and that mystagogy is a process and not a program.

2. **Identify the stages in adult faith development**

   Group 1  2  
   Group 2  2

   Group 1 – Comments:
   • Whirlpool analogy, experience meaning & respond to mystery
   • I think knowing the stages in adult faith development helps us learn where we are personally – where we need to go – and where we need to meet the other person – so they can grow.

   Group 2 – Comments:
   • Understand the stages that all experience in life
   • The use of handouts allowed me to read different scenarios and identify the stages in adult faith formation

3. **Agree upon three ways in which adults in their parish can grow in faith through mystagogical reflection**

   Group 1  7  
   Group 2  3

   Group 1 – Comments:
   • I think the goals/programs we did is wonderful – workshop did an excellent job of educating and then putting that knowledge to valuable use.
   • We were able to identify and agree almost unanimously on the probability of implementing an on-going mystagogy project.
   • Sufficient reflection brought out two major areas – after ACTS retreat experience and death in family where we can develop a mystagogia ministry.

   Group 2 – Comments:
   • Three ways that we can get adults to grow in faith through process
   • It is hard to gather a good number of people and talk about what needs to be/can be done. This workshop educated us and gave us the opportunity to do and see.
   • To explore is opening one’s mind- it is learning and living a life-long experience that will help each of us.
• It was good to get a group of people to talk about a person’s growth in faith.

4. Evaluate the effectiveness of the workshop in light of its stated objectives and their learning needs.

Group 1
0

Group 2
2

Group 2 – Comment:
• With preparation, I will be able to evaluate the success and failures of the mystagogical process.

Question #4: Are there any objectives that were not met? If so, which ones?

Group 1 - Responses
2 No
1 None
1 None that stand out
1 N/A
1 I believe all learning objectives were met.
1 All objectives were met.
4 No response

Group 2 – Responses
3 No
1 None
1 N/A
2 I believe that all the objectives were met.
3 No response

Group 2 - Comments:
• I believe the purpose for the workshop met my expectations.
• All 7 objectives were met – some more in detail.
• While vision was addressed at the pre-workshop meeting with leaders, it was not addressed or incorporated with workshop participants.
Question #5: To what extent did your understanding and knowledge of mystagogy grow from what it was prior to the workshop to what it is now at the end of the workshop?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>5 great extent</th>
<th>3 good extent</th>
<th>3 some extent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>6 great extent</td>
<td>6 good extent</td>
<td>___ some extent</td>
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<td>1 no response</td>
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Group 1 – Comments:

5 great extent
- Sr. Lupe is a very good teacher and modeled herself well in teaching us to understand it.
- How to use mystagogy for life-long transformation/conversion
- Received a deeper understanding of the process
- A very down-to-earth, example driven approach

3 good extent
- I feel the process is “mysterious” by nature, and that we have gone as far as we can intellectually.
- You could do several workshops over an extended period of time and just scratch the surface.

3 some extent
- It’s still a mystery to me
- Before the workshop I never really understood the term “mystagogy” as anything out of formal religious faith formation.
- This for me is something that I need time to grasp.

Group 2 – Comments:

1 no response

6 great extent
- I learned a lot about the role of our parish to create mystagogy within our parish.
- Great teacher!
- Mystagogy was simply a new word in my vocabulary - now I can actually participate in a mystagogical experience.
- I now know the importance of mystagogy as a life-long process.
good extent

- A better understanding of the answering of God’s call
- I was somewhat familiar with it but only in terms of post-RCIA. Now I realize how broadly it can be used for most experiences.
- Glad I came – learned something I was not aware of.

Question #6: What is the most important learning/insight that you are taking with you from this workshop?

Group 1 - responses:
- Mystagogy is adaptable to all things spiritual and secular.
- Working with adults only
- 2: No response
- Excitement! Coming up from the depth of the whirlpool to “get going”. New understanding and tools to share on the journey.
- What we are doing can help another grow & can touch a person deeply.
- Ability to relate life experiences to God’s presence as a formation “program”
- Never knew what mystagogy meant until now and learned so much of it in this workshop
- Entiendo mejor para seguir creciendo en mi fe.
- That evangelization can be done in a concrete, easy, non-threatening way
- The four elements and how they are important for mystagogy

Group 2 – responses:
- The four elements of mystagogy and that mystagogy is a process and not a program
- No response
- Always keep our heart & mind open to God’s voice.
- To find depth with Christ our Lord God so that I may be a constructive vessel of his love
- Mystagogy can be applied to all aspects of life.
- That my role in the church is much more and requires reflection.
- I have learned that through my own brokenness I have an abundance of love to give.
- To keep learning – studying – experiencing – sharing
- The steps of mystagogy and how to use them
- I like about the tree because I was given the full tree and it is up to me keep that tree full of life
- very good understanding
- I have a great deal to learn – this has shown me methods to utilize in my teaching
- The elements of mystagogy
**Question # 7: Rate the facilitator’s/ presenter’s competency in the following areas:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>4 extremely competent</th>
<th>3 competent</th>
<th>2 somewhat competent</th>
<th>1 needs improvement</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. designing the workshop</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. giving directions</td>
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<td>Group 1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c. conveying information clearly</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. demonstrating knowledge of the material presented or discussed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. facilitating the small and large group discussions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. responding to questions and concerns of participants</td>
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<td>Group 1</td>
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<td>Group 2</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Group 1 – Comments:**
- Sr. Lupe is competent, caring & skilled in her adult formation ministry.
- *Creo que nos servirá para ayudar a nuestra comunidad.*
- Excellent Workshops! I will put some of this to use tomorrow at RCIA and CAFÉ.
- Thank you for a very informative and pleasant day.
- No question! You know your “stuff” thanks for giving – choosing - our community. Saying your own “yes” to the Spirit’s lead.
- All was very good, that we need some workshops like this
- Very good workshop. Explained mystagogy very clearly
- Great job, very much needed – our community greatly lacks this process

**Group 2 – Comments:**
- Good overall
- Thank you for all your hard work. It was very informative —learned a lot from this day.
- Great presentation
very good presenter
I am truly blessed with coming to the beautiful workshop.
Sister Guadalupe is an excellent presenter. She is very knowledgeable in her topic and made it very easy to want to know more. Very focused on the topic
Great workshop – we (I) take with me more deeper meaning!
Sr. Lupe did a wonderful job of getting all involved.
Our facilitator, Sr. Lupe, was genuine, compassionate, sincere and devoted. She has been an inspiration for my continued Christian life formation.
Very informative – I feel like my hands have been untied & now I need to put them to good use.
Sr. was very responsive to questions and concerns as well as knowledgeable in the topic.
B.2 Mystagogy and On-Going Adult Faith Formation
Post-Workshop Questionnaire: for Participants

It has been several weeks since you participated in the workshop on “Mystagogy and On-Going Adult Faith Formation. Please answer each question with a numerical code:

4 - to a large extent   3 - to a good extent   2 - to some extent   1 - to no extent

You may then write an explanatory comment as well.

1. As a result of the workshop:

   a. ____ Do you feel closer to God?
      Comment: __________________________________________________________

   b. ____ How aware are you of God’s presence in your life experiences?
      Comment: __________________________________________________________

   c. ____ How has your approach and commitment in ministry been affected?
      Comment: __________________________________________________________

2. What new insights or learning have you reflected upon for deepening the faith formation of adults in your parish through mystagogical catechesis?

____________________________________________________________________

3. How will you be involved in implementing mystagogical catechesis in your parish?

   Group 1: ACTS retreats 2 events; and funerals
   Group 2: Confirmation, ACTS retreat and Cursillo

   ____ inviting people to participate   ____ preparing copies of materials
   ____ Catechist/facilitator:   ____ prayer leader   ____ preparing environment
   ____ preparing and serving refreshments

   Other __________________________________________________________

   Other comments:
   _________________________________________________________________

   _________________________________________________________________
Mystagogy and On-Going Adult Faith Formation
Results of Post-Workshop Questionnaire: for Participants

It has been several weeks since you participated in the workshop on “Mystagogy and On-Going Adult Faith Formation.

Please answer each question with a numerical code:

4 - to a large extent 3 - to a good extent 2 - to some extent 1 - to no extent

You may then write an explanatory comment as well.

1. As a result of the workshop:
   a. Do you feel closer to God?

   Group 1 Comments

   4 to a large extent
   - Mas seguridad en lo que uno va a hacer , por su participación, mas confianza
   - 4

   3 to a good extent
   - Yes, I do feel closer to God. I feel that if I am in need of comfort, prayer, or a friend, I can always count on him to listen. I can speak to him and I know that he is listening.
   - The workshop has continued to keep attentive to my faith and spiritual journey. God speaks on a daily basis.

   1 to no extent
   - 1: I’ve always felt close to God. I don’t think the workshop made any difference.

Responses
- Since this was not the purpose of the Workshops, this question strikes me as “does not apply”. The Workshops were a positive religious experience, but I went to learn, not for spiritual growth.
- I am able to continue to grow in my appreciation of God’s presence in my life. I have also meditated on past events and re-applied my thoughts in light of a mystagogical stance.
Group 2 Comments

4 to a large extent
- Yes, I know that we have the on-going faith formation. But that we have to participate in teaching others to know God.

3 to a good extent
- I have always felt close to God – I know that he is my light & salvation – daily I talk to God.
- 3
- Going through the workshop I realized that we should always have follow-up on everything that we do, so that parishioners do not feel that their work has been forgotten.

Response
- Yes, I feel there is a purpose after a sacrament has been received.

b. How aware are you of God’s presence in your life experiences?

Group 1 Comments

4 to a large extent
- The Holy Spirit has continuously blessed me with awe and reverence. Your workshop has definitely deepened my sense of God’s presence.
- My life surrounds my seeking of God, so “feeling closer to God” is something I strive to do every day
- I am aware of God’s presence in my life’s experiences because many of the prayers that I have said and things that I have asked for have taken place in some form.
- With much prayer I’m aware of the presence of God. I know that I need to make him the center of my life.
- 4
- 4

3 to a good extent
- He aprendido valorar mis experiencias.

Group 2 Comments

4 to a large extent
- Very aware I know that Jesus is my Savior. My faith is very strong.
- I do not go w/o thinking & praying to God daily. I know that w/o his presence in different parts of my life I could not have made it through.
I always knew that God was in my life, but now I feel that God’s presence is always with me.

2 to some extent

- God is with me in all that I do.

C. How has your approach and commitment in ministry been affected?

Group 1 Comments

4 to a large extent

- Has gotten very close to God
- Dar más atención a mi familia- ellos también representan a Dios – llevan la ternura de Dios en ellos

3 to a large extent

- I like the idea – presented in the Workshops as applying to adult catechesis as well as RCIA – of starting with a person’s experience and then moving into teaching ideas.
- It has made me want to serve in any way possible, such as music ministry or eucharistic minister even though sometimes health issues get in the way.
- My music ministry is full speed. I want to do as much as possible to the point of much sacrifice.
- I am using reflections on past and current events with a goal of identifying God’s presence.

Response

- no change

Group 2 Comments

3 to a large extent

- By teaching the faith to RCIA persons
- I am more committed to the ministries that have. I will continue to perform my ministries and ensure that I give God and my ministries everything that I have.
- 3

Responses

- I have become more obedient to God’s purpose for my life.
2. **What new insights or learnings have you reflected upon for deepening the faith formation of adults in your parish through mystagogical catechesis?**

Group 1 Comments

- I am using parish events and experiences to begin an awareness of God’s hand in our lives.
- *Para los que no están tan involucrados en las actividades parroquiales – alejados de la iglesia, estacados en un lugar*
- As said above, starting with a person’s experience of a sacrament, rite, ceremony or worship experience seem to me a non-threatening way of entering into a catechetical relationship.
- I would say to no extent because I have been so busy with planning of the Gala, work and family that I haven’t had much time for it.
- At this time I have too much going on that I need some balance and need spiritual direction.
- By listening to their problems, and by me talking to them how God is so good, if only we let him in our lives
- no response

Group 2 Comments

- People need each other to grow spiritually.
- Lost coin – the prodigal son – I have reflected deeply on God’s love & forgiveness & how much we can do to help those that have pulled away for some reason or another – we need more topics – or training to reach to others with life’s daily needs & have sessions – all yr. round - don’t stop- continue- reaching out w/to more topics that the parish community are in need –
- I’ve reflected on how to incorporate the mystagogical process in all areas of life and not just what was discussed at the workshop.
- Mystagogical catechesis is teaching faith about Jesus Christ and our Church to adults in RCIA.
- I have thought that maybe we should have mystagogy with all the leaders of the different ministries in the parish.

3. **How will you be involved in implementing mystagogical catechesis in your parish?**

Group 1: ACTS retreats 2 events; and funerals

Group 2: Confirmation, ACTS retreat and Cursillo

___ inviting people to participate ___ preparing copies of materials

___ Catechist/facilitator ___ prayer leader ___ preparing environment
___ preparing and serving refreshments
Other

Group 1 comments
6 inviting people to participate
2 preparing copies of materials
1 Catechist/facilitator
1 prayer leader
3 preparing environment
5 preparing and serving refreshments

Other: Figuring out how to implement Family Nights at St. Patrick’s so people of all ages may be catechized.

Other comments:
- Excellent workshop. I look forward to follow-up discussion and feedback.
- *Hemos aprendido y comprendemos otra manera de catequizar – de atraer a la gente dentro del misterio de Dios.*
- Sister Lupe broke up long Workshops into manageable “bites” – with a nice variety of formats! Discussion, sharing, prayer, lecture, worship, and song.
- Sister, we love the work you do and you have helped many different groups. Thank you for all you do. Good luck with your doctorate.
- My call is to be God’s servant. In whatever he calls me, I will be there.
- I really need spiritual direction

Group 2 comments
3 inviting people to participate
2 preparing copies of materials
4 Catechist/facilitator
2 prayer leader
4 preparing environment
2 preparing and serving refreshments

Other: I am happy to help in any way.

Other comments:
- Thank you for this study!
- This has been an eye-opener. We go through a process daily, but we do not meet the needs of what people are want or need in the community and we sometimes ignore. Mystagogy is much deeper than just following the prepared lessons.
Mystagogy and On-Going Adult Faith Formation  
Post-Workshop Questionnaire: for Leaders

It has been several weeks since you participated in the workshop on “Mystagogy and On-Going Adult Faith Formation.”

Please answer each question with a numerical code:  
4 - to a large extent    3 - to a good extent    2 - to some extent    1 - to no extent  
You may then write an explanatory comment as well.

1. As a result of the workshop:
   a. ___ Do you feel closer to God?
      Comment: __________________________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________________
   b. ___ How aware are you of God’s presence in your life experiences?
      Comment: _________________________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________________
   c. ___ How has your approach and commitment in ministry been affected?
      Comment: _________________________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________________
      ________________________________________________________________

2. What new insights or learning's have you reflected upon for deepening the faith formation of adults in your parish through mystagogical catechesis?
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
3. How do you see your leadership role in planning and implementing the processes for mystagogical catechesis for the ideas/experiences agreed upon by the group?

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

4. What progress have you made in planning the processes for mystagogical catechesis with the ideas/experiences agreed upon by the group?

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

5. What opportunities will this project offer your parish?

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

6. What challenges do you anticipate that you will encounter and how will you deal with them?

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

7. Other comments: ____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

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Mystagogy and On-Going Adult Faith Formation
Results of Post-Workshop Questionnaire: For Leaders

It has been several weeks since you participated in the workshop on “Mystagogy and On-Going Adult Faith Formation.”
Please answer each question with a numerical code:

4 - to a large extent      3 - to a good extent      2 - to some extent      1 - to no extent
You may then write an explanatory comment as well.

1. As a result of the workshop:

   a. Do you feel closer to God?

   Group 1 Comments

   _2_ to some extent
   • 2
   • no response

   Group 2 Comments

   _4_ to a large extent
   • I acquired a new way of viewing the sacraments and how I can play a more vital part in helping those involved in learning our faith.

   _3_ to a good extent
   • Yes, I know that God had put different people I my path for a reason
   • I firmly believe that God is always with me and continues to guide on the path that he has placed me on.

   b. How aware are you of God’s presence in your life experiences?

   Group 1 Comments

   _4_ to a large extent
   • I have been blessed with the opportunity to be exposed to much faith development and catechesis. With all of this and this ongoing formation helps me grow in my own knowledge - being in awareness of God’s presence.
   • 4
Group 2 Comments

4 to a large extent
- Daily – and the many blessings that I have received. He has never left me
  …supports me daily…
- I thank God for everything that occurs in my life. Without God’s presence in my
  life I believe that I would be lost.
- Very aware, and thankful, of His presence in all I do.

c. How has your approach and commitment in ministry been affected?

Group 1 Comments

3 to a good extent
- I take more time to reflect on my day to day interactions with others and ask
  the question “have I loved like God wants me to?”
- Reminding me I must step out of my comfort zone to share gifts received.
  Stepped up. So many others, hungry, are wanting more.

Group 2 Comments

4 to a large extent
- My commitment is what I have seen change – I see the candidates,
  catechumens with more respect, more encouraging and I know how much I
  enjoy what I am doing. I pray more asking for directions and thanking the
  Lord for letting me continue with his service

3 to a good extent
- The workshop and mystical experience has enlightened me in the need to
  minister to the people of God after all experiences
- I’m more conscious and conscientious of what I’m doing and/or should be
  doing

3. What new insights or learning's have you reflected upon for deepening the faith
   formation of adults in your parish through mystical catechesis?

Group 1 Comments

- I now look at the different activities we experience in and out of our parish as
  potential mystical opportunities
- How very alike this process is to Spiritual Direction on a one to one session.
Yet here, experiences of God can be shared in group. So similar to growing and sharing one’s faith - great tool.

Group 2 Comments
- Prayer, prayer, prayer and using more Bible stories that will fit what we are doing. Example the Prodigal Son – talk about forgiveness about the love of God, letting us come back home, no matter what – the love of a Father; The Lost Coin, etc...
- Must have personal contact with certain individuals and provide them with a personal invitation. Some people need that personal invitation.
- I reflected more on providing more emphasis on making our sacraments come alive to new recipients and all involved in sacraments.

4. **How do you see your leadership role in planning and implementing the processes for mystagogical catechesis for the ideas/experiences agreed upon by the group?**

Group 1 Comments
- Active, however it will be necessary to set time/day limits in order to be able to devote the appropriate energy the program/process deserves.
- I’ve never seen or looked at myself as leadership role. That may be part of my growing needed. As said above, knowledge; recognizing I must step out of my comfort zone and share all that’s been given. (I see myself as the support to the process.

Group 2 Comments
- I know that I will give some direction with what is expected and I will be the one that will be the mediator between the group and Fr. David. I have what is planned and set with Fr. David and get his opinion. (He has always agreed with what I have brought to him and supported me) I will do the planning with a few of the leaders.
- I believe that I will participate in mystagogy catechesis along with other members of the parish.
- As member of the leadership group, I view my role as one of encourager – encouraging the group to follow through with our plans. Also, I view my role as author of new processes for different groups in the parish.

5. **What progress have you made in planning the processes for mystagogical catechesis with the ideas/experiences agreed upon by the group?**

Group 1 Comments
- I attended the planning session.
- We have two areas to implement. ACTS being the closest one to my heart.
- On-going and leaving those who attended retreat longing
Group 2 Comments

- We have worked on the dates, schedule and time, and who will be willing to continue working with the newly elect and planning questions to give us feedback on what they want.
- I am still working finalizing all the questions and suggestions that we have come up as a group.
- At the present time, I have met with and discussed the process with other leaders and we’ve spent time looking forward to the group of catechists who will benefit from mystagogical catechesis.

6. What opportunities will this project offer your parish?

Group 1 Comments
- I believe people are anxious to learn more about their Catholic faith and the project may offer just the right energy and vehicle for them to grow
- For community growth. Greater service. faith sharing building

Group 2 Comments
- For those that want to do something and do not know how to help; this will be an opportunity for them to help with preparing activities; also planning a meal; that have talents of speakers and the parish will grow with more support with the incoming members of the parish.
- The parish will be able to reach those parishioners that have recently received the sacrament of confirmation.
- Another process in growing in love with our faith.

7. What challenges do you anticipate that you will encounter and how will you deal with them?

Group 1 Comments
- Actually getting people to take a “dip” into the mystagogical process. Energetically promoting the project.
- Skeptical persons - invite them anyway. Resistance – invite them anyway. Continue to offer places to come together.

Group 2 Comments
- First and foremost is to make sure that Msgr. David is with us and support what we want to put in place. Also including the staff and inviting them to make a choice because there are some that the Lord uses beautiful with so much love and direction; and to get the parishioners to work with the future members of our community. I know that through prayer, it can be done.
I am not sure that all who are invited to this process will choose to participate. We will have to make every effort to contact these individuals and encourage them to attend this process.

I anticipate some reluctance in the participants, as well as anxiety in the leaders. Prayer and the idea of following through and getting to the end, will help.

8. Other comments:

Group 1 Comments
- No responses

Group 2 Comments
- This study has pointed me in the direction that I now understand and know we are lacking. I have always known there are important topics and that we need to have some form of direction, or rather, I needed some direction. I know that we will continue letting the Holy Spirit guide us and making a positive impact.
- In meeting and talking to the other leaders, I have already run into some reluctance – “we’re so busy,” “how will we know we are doing this right,” some people already think we do too much but, I honestly believe that if we keep pushing, this will be a wonderful gift for our parish.
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Macalintal, Diana. “Christian Initiation of Adults: Mystagogy.”  


LETTERS OF PERMISSION

Oct 3

Copyright Permission: International Commission on English in the Liturgy

Dear Sr. Ramirez,

Thank you for your email of 1 October 2012.

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Jason McFarland jmcfarland@eliturgy.org  
free of charge, for the inclusion of  
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2. Capitalization, punctuation and sense-line format will follow the official edition exactly.

3. This item is not for sale.

With every good wish,

Edmund Yates  
Assistant to the Executive Director

International Commission on English in the Liturgy  
1100 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 710  
Washington, DC 20036 USA
TO: Sister Guadalupe Ramirez, MCDP
FROM: Gina Garroway
    NCCL Associate Director

DATE: October 20, 2011

SUBJECT: Permission to Reprint

This is to acknowledge your request to reprint the material found in chapter VI “Concrete Approaches to Adult Faith Formation” (pp. 44-51) of our 2003 publication, Nurturing Adult Faith: A Manual for Parish Leaders, edited by Kristina Krimm, Jane A. Pierron, and David M. Riley. Please follow the instructions below.

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Dear Sr. Guadalupe,

Thanks for being back in touch. I am unable to find the email I sent you last year. Please simply note that this is "Copyright, The North American Forum on the Catechumenate. Used with permission."

Sincerely,

Jim

James M. Schellman
Executive Director
The North American Forum on the Catechumenate
202-884-9762
www.naforum.org
Catholic Community of Gonzales and Waelder
From: Sue Cameron [scameron@twentythirdpublications.com]
Sent: Wednesday, October 05, 2011 2:27 PM
To: Catholic@stx.rr.com
Subject: Dreams and Visions

Dear Sr. Guadalupe,
Thank you for your letter requesting to make about 40 copies of the ideas for adult formation from the book Dreams and Visions by Bill Huebsch for your workshop. Such permission is granted at no charge. Please also include our toll free number and web address in your credit. (www.23rdpublications.com 800-321-0411).
Thank you again for your request. All the best to you for a successful workshop.

Sue Cameron
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Twenty-Third Publications PO Box 6015 New London CT 06320
10/5/2011
October 6, 2010

Sister Guadalupe Ramirez, MCDP
St. James Catholic Church
417 N. College St.
Gonzales, TX 78629
Fax: (830) 672-1058

Sister Ramirez,

I write in response to your permission request dated October 5, 2011 seeking permission to make fifty copies of pages 149 and 150 in the Rito de la Iniciacion Cristiana de Adultos and page 346, nos. 22-24 in the “Estatutos Nacionales para el Catecumenado.”

We are pleased to grant you gratis permission to use these texts.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance in this or any other matter.

Sincerely,

Denise Jansen
Staff Assistant
On behalf of:

Mary Elizabeth Sperry
Associate Director
(202) 541-3098
Dear Sr. Guadalupe,

I apologize for the delay in responding. We had some technology difficulties and are still catching up.

No problem. Feel free to make use of the resources as you need.

Peace and Merry Christmas,
Fr. Dan

Fr. Dan Merz
Associate Director
Secretariat of Divine Worship
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
3211 4th St. NE
Washington, DC 20017
voice: (202) 541-3060
fax: (202) 541-3088