

2-02: RCIA AND CHURCH: MYSTAGOGIA – WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT BY MARY BIRMINGHAM

- **FOUR ELEMENTS OF MYSTAGOGIA** 1. Spiritually prepare for liturgy, 2. Celebrate liturgy, 3. Mystagogically reflect on the liturgy, 4. Appropriate meaning, conversion and transformation.

MYSTERIES/SACRAMENTS/SYMBOLS

- What are those mysteries upon which we are to reflect in order to find meaning and transformation for our lives?
- LITURGICAL MYSTERIES: Liturgical Year, Sacramental Signs and Symbols, Ritual Prayers, Scripture, Rites
- MYSTAGOGICAL REFLECTION/CATECHESIS celebrates, remembers, and reflects upon the word, the symbols, the gestures and ritual prayers of the Sunday liturgy, sacraments, feasts and liturgical season that hold within them the major tenets of our faith.
- MYSTAGOGIA LEADS TO MISSION—TO GO OUT AND REPAIR OUR WORLD.
- How do we “do” this mystagogical catechesis?

Content of the Period of Mystagogy

- ▢ Gather for one hour after Mass.
- ▢ Proclaim and break open Cycle A Easter Gospels.
- ▢ Reflect upon the riches of the Gospels and how the neophytes are now Christ bearers through participation in the Eucharist, and are invited more deeply into the mystery of Jesus' love for the world.
- ▢ Reflect upon and commit to becoming transformed missionaries of Christ through continued acts of charity and mercy.
- ▢ Reflect upon the ritual celebration of Triduum and break open the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and Eucharist.

Possible Focus for Gathering

1. Gather to share their experience of the Triduum—Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Vigil.
2. Gather to mystagogically reflect on their experience of baptism.
3. Gather to mystagogically reflect on their experience of confirmation.
4. Gather to mystagogically reflect on their experience of Eucharist.
5. Pentecost banquet.

Second Sunday of Easter

- ▢ Gather for one hour after Mass.
- ▢ GOSPEL: Proclaim and break open Cycle A Easter Gospel . John 20:19-31: Jesus extends his peace and empowers apostles to forgive sins and Thomas doubts the resurrection. How does this Gospel speak to their experience of initiation? What does Thomas teach us about our doubts should they occur? .
- ▢ ACTS OF CHARITY: How is God calling them to share Jesus' peace and reconciliation out in their world?

- ▢ REFLECTION ON THE SACRAMENTS AND PASCHAL MYSTERY.
- ▢ Reflect upon their experience of the Triduum. Bring photos, videos, recall, reminisce, revisit the experience.
- ▢ What touched them, how were they transformed? What are the implications for their lives going forward? In what way, if any, was God present to them?
- ▢ Jesus died and rose again for our salvation. He invites us to die and rise with him. In what way are you called to die and rise again for yourself and others now that you are fully initiated?

Third Sunday of Easter

- ▢ Gather for one hour after Mass.
- ▢ GOSPEL: Proclaim and break open Cycle A Easter Gospel . Luke 24:13-35 Jesus revealed himself in word and sacrament on the road to Emmaus. How does this Gospel speak to their experience of initiation? What does Jesus' encounter with the disciples have to teach us? .
- ▢ ACTS OF CHARITY: How is God calling them to share Jesus who feeds them with his word and his sacrament of Eucharist out in their world?

REFLECTION ON THE SACRAMENTS AND PASCHAL MYSTERY.

- ▢ Reflect upon their experience of the **Sacrament of Baptism** .Recall the experience of water: Explore the various ways God is present in the sacrament, how God is revealed through the sign of water. What spoke to them in the sacrament of baptism? How were they transformed? What are the implications for their lives going forward? In what way, if any, was God present to them? In what way is their baptism an invitation to die and rise with Jesus?

Fourth Sunday of Easter

- ▢ Gather for one hour after Mass.
- ▢ GOSPEL: Proclaim and break open Cycle A Easter Gospel . John 10:1-10 Jesus is the Good Shepherd who leads us and guides us even if we stray. How does this Gospel speak to their experience of initiation? Where is a shepherd needed in their Christian journey at this time? Are there any roadblocks? What is the Good News for their lives in this Gospel?
- ▢ ACTS OF CHARITY: How is God calling them to abandon their lives into the embrace of the Good Shepherd's? In what way is God asking them to take the Good News of the Good Shepherd out in their world—to reach out to the poor and suffering people in the world??

- ▢ REFLECTION ON THE SACRAMENTS AND PASCHAL MYSTERY.
- ▢ Reflect upon their experience of the Confirmation. Recall the symbol of oil. Explore the various ways God's Spirit was present in the sacrament. How was God's Spirit revealed through the sign of oil.What touched them, how were they transformed? What are the implications for their lives going forward? In what way does this sacrament help them to become better disciples?

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Fifth Sunday of Easter

- Gather for one hour after Mass.
- GOSPEL Proclaim and break open Cycle A Easter Gospel . John 14:1-12 Jesus promised he was going to prepare a place for his disciples and he taught them that he is the way the truth and the life—we can always turn to him when we lost our way.
- How does this Gospel speak to their experience of initiation? What does it mean for your life that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life?

- ACTS OF CHARITY: How is God calling them to share the Good News that Jesus is our life, our truth and our hope out in their world? In what way is God calling them to reach out to the poor and suffering?
- REFLECTION ON THE SACRAMENTS AND PASCHAL MYSTERY.
- Reflect upon their experience of the **Sacrament of Eucharist**. Recall the experience of bread and wine. Explore the way God was present in the elements of bread and wine. What are the implications for your life? What does it mean to you that you are to become what you have received? Who in your life needs you to allow them to feed off of you?

Sixth Sunday of Easter

- Gather for one hour after Mass.
- GOSPEL: Proclaim and break open Cycle A Easter Gospel . John 14:15-21 Jesus promised to send his Spirit to be with us until the end of time—we are never to fear. No matter what obstacles we face, the Spirit of the resurrected Christ will be with us. In what way is this Gospel Good News for them today?
- How does this Gospel speak to their experience of initiation? What does it mean for their lives that God's Spirit is with them? What evidence is there?

- ACTS OF CHARITY: How is God calling them to share the Good News that Jesus sent his Spirit to be with us always out in their world?
- REFLECTION ON THE SACRAMENTS AND PASCHAL MYSTERY: Continue to reflect upon their experience of the **Sacrament of Eucharist**. Recall the experience of bread and wine.. Explore the way God was and continues to be present in the elements of bread and wine. What are the implications? Has your life changed as a result of your participation in the Eucharist? What does it mean to you that you are to become what you have received? Who in your life needs you to offer them the Christ you received?

MYSTAGOGICAL REFLECTION OF BAPTISM

NATURAL SIGN

- Water was an important symbol at the Easter Vigil. Why is water such an important symbol?
- What is it about water that reminds us of God's relationship with us? What are its' natural properties?
- In what way does water reveal God to us?
- ***What spoke to you as water was used at your baptism?***

LITURGICAL SIGN

- How was water used at the Easter Vigil?
- Why did we use water in the ritual of baptism?
- Why was the sign of water used in your baptism? In what way were you, or have you ever been touched by the sign of water or your baptism in general? What does it mean for your life? In what way did your baptism speak to your heart, convict you or invite conversion of heart, mind, and behavior?

BIBLICAL SIGN

- What are some Biblical stories having to do with water at the Vigil?
- What did those stories teach us about the presence of God in those waters--in that biblical sign of God's presence?
- What did those stories reveal to us about the sacramental sign of water?
- What other stories in the Bible use the sign of water or baptism to reveal God?
- What story of water in the Bible speaks to your life the most right now?

ECCLESIAL SIGN

- Drawing from your experience of the water of baptism at the Easter Vigil, what did your experience reveal to you about what Christians have always believed about baptism?
- Why has water always been used as a sign of baptism?
- What does the Church teach about baptism and in what way does it resonate with your experience at the Easter Vigil?
- What does your baptism mean to you?

➤ RESOURCES

- [Formed in Faith](#) (Sessions for Inquiry, Catechumenate, and Ongoing Faith Formation), Mary Birmingham. World Library Publications (wlpmusic.com)
- [Confirming Adult Catholics: Five Sessions for Preparation and Reflection](#), Mary Birmingham. World Library Publications (wlpmusic.com)
- [Purified and Enlightened](#) - RCIA Sessions for Lent, Mary Birmingham. World Library Publications (wlpmusic.com)
- [Year Round Catechumenate](#) Mary Birmingham, Liturgical Training Publications
- [Faith, Life and Creed](#) (A Complete Catechesis for Christian Life (User-friendly sessions for breaking open the Word for every Sunday of each cycle plus 41 doctrinal sessions). Available through (TEAMRCIA.COM).
- [Word and Worship Workbook, Year A, B and C](#), Mary Birmingham, Paulist Press
- FACEBOOK: Mary Birmingham RCIA
- EMAIL: mary.birmingham@icloud.com