

Keeping the Mystery in Mystagogy: Mystagogy and Accompaniment

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What is 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.” (RCIA, #244)

2



Experience

“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...Out of this experience, which belongs to Christians as it is lived, they derive a new perception of the faith, of the Church, and the world.” (RCIA, #245)

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Community and Relationship

“...interaction between the neophytes and the faithful is made easier and more beneficial...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.” (RCIA, #246)

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Recap + Discussion

What is your understanding of mystagogy?

Did the readings affirm or challenge this understanding?

5



What does mystagogy look like?

“[Mystagogical catechesis]...is less an explication and more an evocation. It works like sonar: it plumbs the depths not to deny the depths, but rather to point out how deep they actually are. It works like diving gear: it allows one to breathe in depths otherwise inaccessible and to swim down and surface buried treasures otherwise overlooked.”

(Augustine and the Catechumenate, 424)

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The Structure of Mystagogy

1. Begin with liturgical symbol
2. Free-associate to gather scriptural stories
3. How does the liturgical symbol appear in nature?
4. How does the liturgical symbol appear in the local culture?
5. Probe each through the lens of a sacrament

From Augustine and the Catechumenate

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Recap + Discussion

Can you think of any examples of a liturgical element that one could explore in mystagogy?

What does mystagogy look like during the age of COVID-19?

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What is the relationship between mystagogy and the rest of catechesis?

“Every form of catechesis would do well to attend to the ‘way of beauty’ (*via pulchritudinis*). Proclaiming Christ means showing that to believe in and to follow him is not only something right and true, but also something beautiful, capable of filling life with new splendor and profound joy, even in the midst of difficulties. Every expression of true beauty can thus be acknowledged as a path leading to an encounter with the Lord Jesus.” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 167)

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What is the relationship between mystagogy and accompaniment?

“The Church will have to initiate everyone – priests, religious and laity – into this “art of accompaniment” which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other (cf. Ex 3:5). The pace of this accompaniment must be steady and reassuring, reflecting our closeness and our compassionate gaze which also heals, liberates and encourages growth in the Christian life...Although it sounds obvious, spiritual accompaniment must lead others ever closer to God, in whom we attain true freedom.” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 169-170).

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Accompaniment

“Spiritual accompaniment is the apostolate of intentional relationship that is oriented toward a definitive direction of growth in holiness and transformation in the Person of Christ.” (*The Art of Accompaniment*, 8)

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Accompaniment and Experience

“Like data for a scientist or marble for a sculptor, the material for spiritual accompaniment is human experience- the living account of what it means and feels like to be a human person...As “the locus for the manifestation and realization of salvation,” (*General Directory for Catechesis*, #152) the human experience of the one accompanied sheds light on the call of the Spirit at work in their life. For the person of faith, human experience is where the Gospel is actualized and embodied, making present the Paschal Mystery in the life of a human being.” (*The Art of Accompaniment*, 53)

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Recap + Discussion

“One who accompanies others has to realize that each person’s situation before God and their life in grace are mysteries which no one can fully know from without.”
(*Evangelii Gaudium*, 172)

What connections do you see between accompaniment and mystagogy? How might you include accompaniment in mystagogical catechesis?

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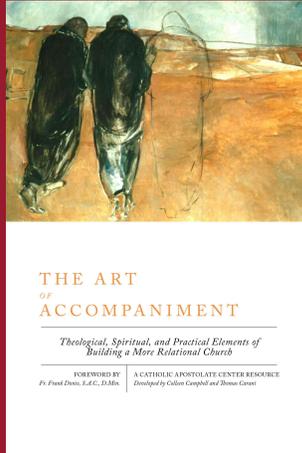


Discussion

- Take-aways?
- Questions?
- New mysteries?

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The Art of Accompaniment: Theological, Spiritual, and Practical Elements of Building a More Relational Church



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