

## **Ilia Delio “The Sacrament of Everyday Life” part 3**

So the deepening of the sacramental nature of everyday life—it means an awakening of consciousness that can celebrate divinity within the ordinary. I think how often it would be good for us wherever we are, this moment, this day, to note how many times we take things in our lives for granted. How we just go about assuming that everything should be there for us, including our own health. Do we take everything as in this moment as a gift and celebrate it in some way? I think that’s really Eucharist is about. Eucharist is symbolizing a new way of imagining the world we live in. The world that is, you know, having a dish of ice cream or being on a call with a friend or maybe disagreeing with someone—everything has grace within it. Our task is to see the moment of grace.

### **The Eucharistic Body of World**

**Christening the universe: to see, to love**

**Communion of life: to unite**

**Holiness and wholeness: to gather in**

**Highest communion with God is most intense**

So we need to widen again the notion of Eucharist, the fact Jesus is not locked into a piece of bread, that Christ is what the world is about, that union of the divine and human, that bringing together of God and world. So that what we’re about in a sense, if we see the love at the heart of the world, we then become part of this Christ mystery. Therefore we can help christen the universe, baptize the universe, that this baptism is a constant, ongoing way of life in Christ, therefore to love in new ways, to be part of this new communion of life, all that we’re saying here is that we have made liturgy and church entirely too static. The whole point of these rituals is to enhance life, that life

itself now is seen with new eyes, in a way that we can be part of a new wholeness by gathering in what is fragmented, by finding the fragments of our own lives, and accepting the grace of healing those fragments. All we're saying here if we could find the planet we're on as the cathedral of God's love, then the highest communion with God would be the most intense communion with the earth.

## **“Eucharistia” = Thanksgiving**



- **Eucharistic imagination – everything has its part in God's creation**
- **We are living and dying into an ever larger selfhood – part of a whole that is a living body of Christ.**
- **The “body” of Christ: We are in one another for the life of each other.**
- **St. Francis of Assisi: “Canticle of Creatures”**

So I think Eucharistia, from which we have the word eucharist, means thanksgiving. It comes from the Old Testament prayer of thanksgiving in the Hemaya. So a eucharistic imagination is one that sees as part of God's creation. Eucharist is not just having a party of good life. Life is filled with suffering. We suffer through into the higher things of love. It's a constant living and dying into an ever-larger self-hood. The whole point of a eucharistic life and a life of Christification is that we do not remain individual. We do not remain as little partials isolated with our own self-centered interests. If we see that there's something more that we're part of, that we're part of a whole, and we need to act, then, from that whole. That's, I think, what this Body of Christ is about. We're in one another, with one another, for the life of one another. Again, I think, the one saint, and I do have to admit a bit of partiality here, the one who really got it was Francis of Assisi, who, by the way, almost never spoke about Jesus Christ in his writings. I think

he might have used the name Jesus maybe three times in the 86 writings we have of him. But at the end of his life, Francis, sick, blind and suffering, composes one of the most life-filled hymns in the Umbrian dialect: the Canticle of Creatures. I'd love to read you the whole thing because I think most of you are familiar with it.

### *CANTICLE OF THE CREATURES*

*Most High, all-powerful, good Lord,  
Yours are the praises, the glory, and the honour, and all blessing.*

*To You alone, Most High, do they belong,  
and no human is worthy to mention Your name.*

*Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures,  
especially Sir Brother Sun,  
Who is the day and through whom You give us light.*

*And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendour;  
and bears a likeness of You, Most High One.*

*Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars,  
in heaven You formed them clear and precious and beautiful.*

*Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Wind,  
and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather,  
through whom You give sustenance to Your creatures.*

*Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water,  
who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.*

*Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Fire,  
through whom You light the night,  
and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.*

*Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth,  
who sustains and governs us,  
and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs.*

*Praised be You, my Lord, through those who give pardon for Your  
love, and bear infirmity and tribulation.*

*Blessed are those who endure in peace  
for by You, Most High, shall they be crowned.*

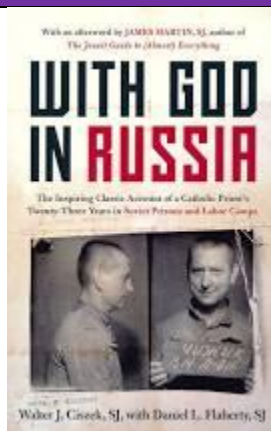
*Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death,  
from whom no one living can escape.*

*Woe to those who die in mortal sin.  
Blessed are those whom death will find in Your most holy will,  
for the second death shall do them no harm.*

*Praise and bless my Lord and give Him thanks  
and serve Him with great humility.*

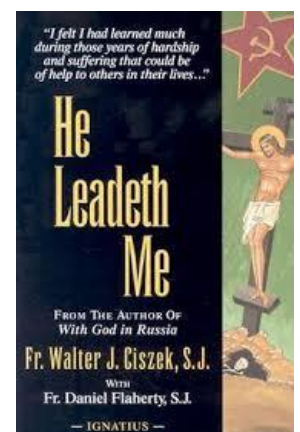
The whole universe now is the cathedral for Francis, the whole of it is the church of God, and Christ is the center. He never mentions the words Jesus Christ, and yet the whole thing is a doxology. Praised be you my Lord, for Sister Water, which is very useful and precious and humble and chaste. Praised be you, my Lord, for Brother Fire, through whom you light the night and he is beautiful and playful. Praised be you my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us and who produces varied fruits with colored herbs and flowers. Blessed are those who endure in peace, for by you, Most High, they shall be crowned. Peace is the fruit of love, a type of love that is not about “Gee, this will make me feel really good,” but a love sometimes that will suffer misunderstandings, suffer being rejected, suffer when there’s really no one who wants to go that way, suffer pain through physical illness, as Francis himself did. You might say the kind of sacramental vision that Francis attained in his life was really one finally that allowed himself to be taken up by the power of love itself. He found that love at the heart of the universe.

## Walter Ciszek



**“The fullest freedom I had ever known, the greatest sense of security came from abandoning my will to do only the will of God.”**

**-Walter Ciszek, S.J.**



As I was reflecting on this, I could not help but think of someone I knew at the beginning of my early religious life. As a young sister I was introduced to Fr. Walter

Ciszek. Some of you might know Fr. Walter or you don't. But Fr. Walter was a Jesuit from Pennsylvania who in 1931 went on a mission to Poland, and in 1939 was captured and charged with being a Vatican spy. He was finally sentenced and sent to Moscow in Lubyanka Prison, where he was in terrible solitary confinement for five years, not just confinement, but tortured and under intense interrogation. He lived 23 years as a prisoner in Russia. He eventually was released from solitary confinement and sent for years of hard labor in Siberia. He really had resigned himself, that that was his fate. Fr. Walter tells us that at some point he came to a point in his life where either there was no God, so for such a God of love, for him to wind up in this predicament didn't make any sense. So either God did not exist or God was simply the entire center of his life. He has this profound conversion where he realizes as he says here, "The fullest freedom I had ever known, the greatest sense of security came from abandoning my will to do only the will of God."

I can just read you a passage from his second book *He Leadeth Me* where he says

"I began to realize that there was but a single vision: God who was all in all. There was but one will that directed all things: God's will. I had only to see it, discern it in every circumstance in which I found myself, and let myself be ruled by it. God is in all things, sustains all things, directs all things. To discern this in every situation and circumstance. To see God's will in all things was accept each circumstance and situation and let oneself be borne along in perfect confidence and trust. Nothing could separate me from God because God was in all things. No danger could threaten me. No fear could shake me, except the fear of losing sight of God. The future, hidden as it was, was hidden in God's will and therefore acceptable to me no matter what it might bring. The past, with all of its failures was not forgotten. It remained remind me of the weakness of human nature and the folly of putting any faith in self, but it no longer depressed me. I looked no longer to self to guide me, relied on it no longer in any way, so it could not again fail me. By renouncing finally and completely all control of my life and future destiny, I was relieved as a consequence of all responsibility. I was freed therefore from anxiety and worry, from every tension and could float upon the tide of God's sustaining providence in perfect peace of soul."

One of course, read here St. Therese of Lisieux. You know the funny thing is, these holy men and women come to this place of complete abandonment in a way that's completely contrary to what our modern culture has said: self-sufficiency, rely on yourself on your own powers, do not rely on others, right? And yet, the proof, you might say, is in the pudding, as the saying goes. Fr. Walter, St. Therese, they accepted, now this is not any naive acceptance of anything that happens to us. There's always discernment, something about that radical trust, that we need to take hold of. Abandoning to the will of God means abandoning to the love of God, that no matter what happens to us, God will sustain us.



To finish Fr. Walter's story, after 23 years and unbeknownst to him, he was exchanged for a Russian spy, and he returned to the US. I met him in 1984. He was a frail, little thing with a faith that I've never seen in any other person.

## Teilhard de Chardin:

### Prayer and Knowledge (Scientia)



- Science and prayer are intimately connected
- ‘Adoration’s real name is research’
- Without research/discovery there can be no possibility of real mystical life

Teilhard had this same type of trust, radical trust, because Teilhard himself speaks about abandoning his own life to God. How many times, you know he was silenced by the Church, he was silenced by the Jesuits. He could not publish anything in his own lifetime. But these incredible men and women have a radical trust that we lack sometimes. We get all nervous, because it's not working our way. We want everything to just back to normal. It's gotta be what it was. Instead, opening our eyes to say, “No, the power of love is in our midst, and love is doing new things.” Therefore, Teilhard says the more inward you go into this power of love in our lives, into this God center, the more then that you will want to explore the world you're living in.

In Teilhard's view, prayer and knowledge go together. He helps heal what modernity divided. So, what Teilhard says is that the real name for adoration is research; not just sitting in a chapel, but discovery. To adore God, a God who is at home in this universe, is to discover God. What Teilhard says is without research and discovery there can be no possibility of real mystical life. I think that's exactly what Fr. Walter found in his own way, and Therese in her own way. They discovered a God of love. They discovered that by letting go of their own ego and allowing that ego to control them.

## Teilhard de Chardin



- Teilhard's mysticism sets **reason** at the center of the **mystical**. The mystical act involves the synthesizing work of the mind.
- Science, like the mind itself, is a process always probing into the unknown.
- Mysticism is not a matter of contemplating a truth already established but **lay in the very discovery that creates a new truth**.

Teilhard's mysticism sets reason at the center of the mystical. The mystical act involves the work of the mind, the mind that seeks to know, the mind that's constantly probing. Even our engagements here on Zoom, where we seek to know, is a mystical act. Mysticism is not just contemplating a truth, according to Teilhard. Mysticism lies in the very act of discovery that creates a new truth. We do not have the hold on God. We have no clue who God is! The whole point of discovering the world, of attending to the world, is to discover God, discover this power of love.

## Teilhard de Chardin



**-Scientists who are dedicated to build a better world and to a common human future experience 'dark adoration' – immanent God**

**-Science is drawn by the unknown god of matter.**

**-Religious experience [revelation] makes the unknown God known.**

So Teilhard would say that scientists, who are dedicated to building a better world unto a common better future – they are mystics. They are involved in what we call “dark adoration.” They may not be believers. In fact, many of them just could be agnostic. It doesn't matter. There's something pulling them into that need to discover. Just as science is drawn by the unknown god of matter, religious experience and revelation make the unknown God known. That's really just the difference between them.

## Teilhard de Chardin



**-To love God with all one's body, heart and soul with every fiber of the unifying universe *is to discover and create*.**

**-Thinking is a supreme spiritual act. [God is] a power calling the mind to bring a new unity into being.**

**-To become “artisans of the future”**

I think what we're saying here is that in a sacramental world, we are given every opportunity to not just love God with all that we are, but to discover God. Therefore, it's not just the act of discovery itself, in creating is an act of revelation. That's the part that we've got to get our heads around. God is not a thing. God is a personal beingness that

risers up in the awareness of the discovery itself. So, thinking becomes a spiritual act. Discovery is a spiritual act. The sacramentality of everyday life is, in a sense, thinking, discovering, and creating. So Teilhard says we become “artisans of the future.” We’re not just victims of the present, we’re not just hanging on and hoping that we would get into the future, we become then shapers of the future for a planet that is in need of healing and wholeness and a new vision.

## John Duns Scotus



**- The intellect is not an end but a means to love.  
To see; to know; to love**

**-The fullest development of the rational person  
involves love and communion.**

**-The morally good act is a work of art, the art of  
love, in which all dimensions of life are in  
harmony.**

Just to throw in my friend John Duns Scotus here who wrote in the 13<sup>th</sup> century very much like Teilhard “the intellect is not an end but a means to love. We have made the fortunate, unfortunate divorce of knowledge as an end in itself, knowledge as power, knowledge as control, knowledge as manipulation, when in fact the knowing is only to serve the loving, right? Knowledge itself can be a form of love when it yields to love. So Scotus speaks of the rational person as the one who truly loves. The morally good act is a work of art. It’s the art of loving the world, of loving the self, of loving the neighbor. Love not just again in naïve goodness, but loving through the hurts, the disappointments, through the conflicts, the rejections. Because at the heart of all that there’s a goodness that is God.





## Living a New Sacramental Life

**Be present, attend to what is in the moment**

**Look and see; harness the energies of love**

**Invent; create. Do something new everyday.  
Participate in God's ongoing creativity.**

To bring us all together, we are being invited in this moment of crisis to have new vision. I think if we fail to read the signs of the times we are living in, we are going to lose out on a very great opportunity. To want to go back to the old normal, in my view, is a great mistake. It's a rejection of the gift. I think we need to slow down, and to first wake up to what this gift's about. I think many of us do this in your own ways, but again, it's being present, being present means you're there, body, mind, and soul. Your focus of consciousness is on the concrete reality. How many times we're sitting with someone, or we're talking to someone but we're really not attentive to them. That's what the sacrament of the Presence is about. We are to look and to see as you take a walk or a bike ride or you meet someone even at the social distancing of six feet. See; see them. Therefore, I think that the person who sees harnesses the energies of love: to gather in the energies. Third, I think we need to be very attentive to what we do on a moment-to-moment basis, because I think we do these things very routine. We do them in a way that we're unconscious. But be attentive to what you are creating, to what you're discovering. In fact, I think a good maxim here is do something new every day, because when we're doing something new we're participating in God's ongoing creativity. God is not finished with us or this universe. God is creating as we speak.



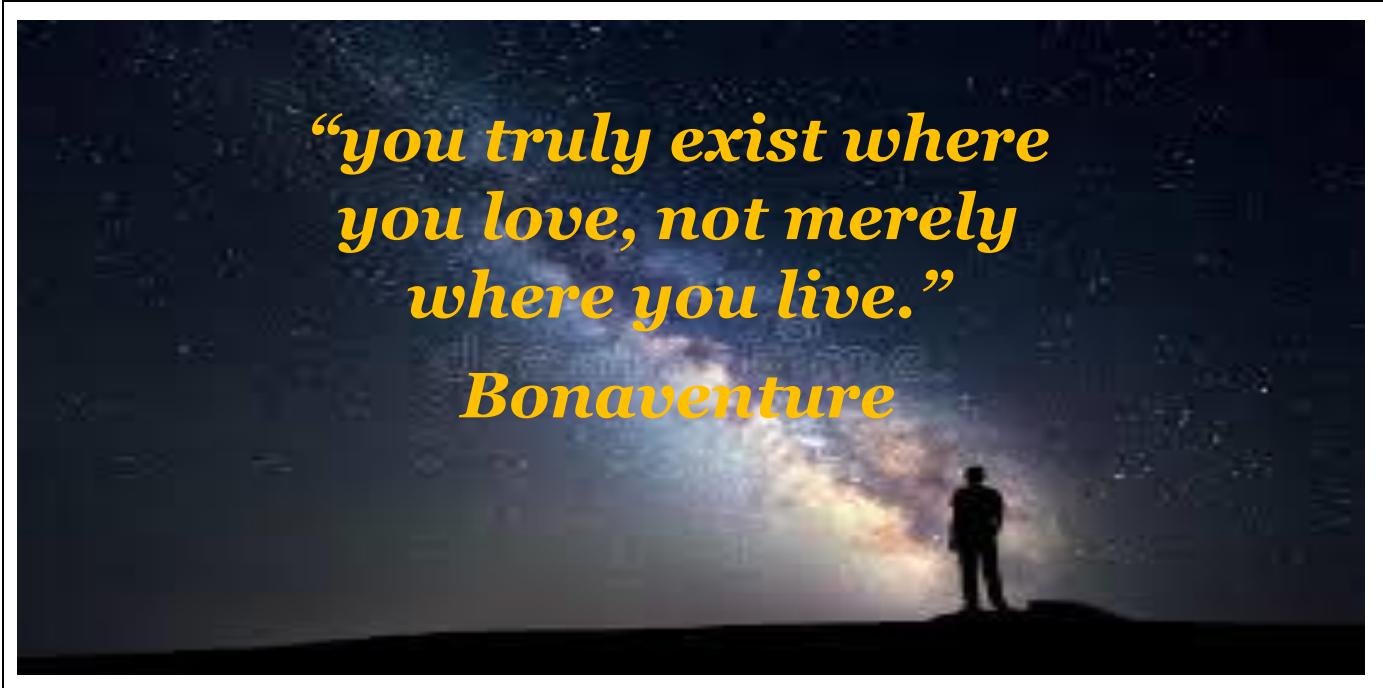
**Discover new things each day**

**Think in a way that deepens love**

**Suffer in and through love, for others are suffering , too**

**The world unfolds through us, our quality of human thought and life**

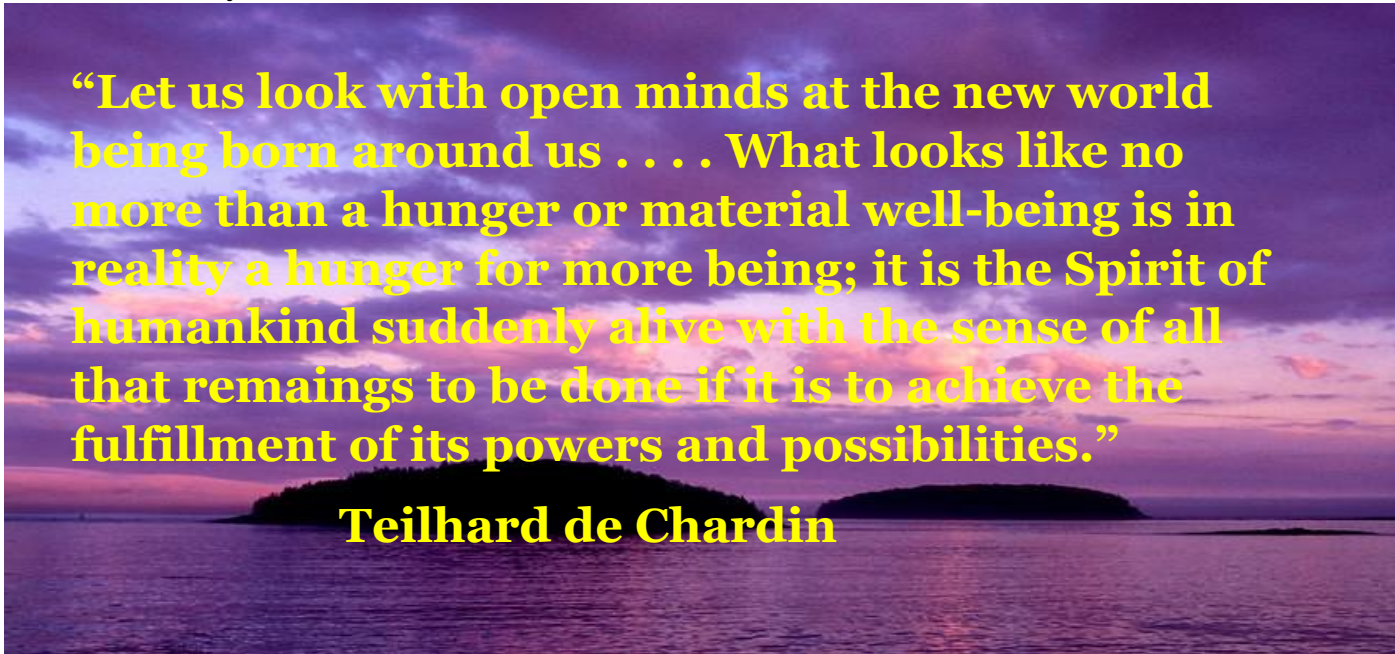
So, discover, think in ways that deepen love. Don't get stuck in the ruts of having the need to constantly reaffirm the individual self. Right? My thoughts, they don't agree with me. Well, ok, let it go. We have a hard time letting things go. But that's what surrendering to the will of God means. There's a power here that's more than ourselves. Let it go. Suffer in and through to a higher love. Realize that others are suffering too. I think sometimes we often forget this, that no suffering is as great as my suffering. Well, in fact, there are sufferings. I think we here in our Western world, I know I can only speak for North America, sometimes we forget the tremendous suffering throughout the world. I'm thinking sometimes of the people in Yemen, for example, who not only have had vast destruction of their house and homes and their livelihoods, but they now have the Covid-19 virus as well. So, there's so much work for us to do here. There's so much work in terms of loving the world. To realize that the world unfolds through us: there is no world apart from us. Therefore, our quality of human thought and life make a profound difference, not only to what the world becomes, but to what God becomes.



***“you truly exist where  
you love, not merely  
where you live.”***

***Bonaventure***

Bonaventure has that wonderful saying, “You truly exist, you have life, where you love, and not merely where you live.” It doesn’t matter if you live in a giant mansion or a small hut. If you love, and you are striving to see and to love each moment of each day, you will be fully alive.



**“Let us look with open minds at the new world  
being born around us . . . . What looks like no  
more than a hunger or material well-being is in  
reality a hunger for more being; it is the Spirit of  
humankind suddenly alive with the sense of all  
that remains to be done if it is to achieve the  
fulfillment of its powers and possibilities.”**

**Teilhard de Chardin**

As Teilhard says, “It’s the moment to look with open minds at the new world being born around us. Yes, the old is dying. It has to die. This is an open universe. We don’t want to stay the same. In fact, to stay the same speaks to me of tremendous fear and lack of trust. But Teilhard says that “What looks like no more than a hunger for material well-being is in reality a hunger for more being.” I think that’s what draws us together this afternoon. “It is the spirit of humankind suddenly alive with all that

remains to be done if it is to achieve the fulfillment of its powers and possibilities.” God is doing new things. That is the Easter message. We are part of what that New is. Therefore, we need to rekindle our vision. Get the cataracts out of our eyes. To see what we behold and to love what we see. To forgive, to let go, to know that the power of God’s love is much greater than anything we can ask or imagine. So the sacramentality of the world is the way to heal this earth that is suffering. It’s suffering because we have failed to love it, and we have failed to love one another. We are invited through this crisis we are living in to find a new world together.

So a big thank you to Greg Hansell and the team. Greg, especially for putting this PowerPoint together. Let’s now take a little time for some Q&A and some sharing.

Q&A not transcribed.

### **Glossary of terms**

**Catholic** – universal, all-embracing

**Eucharist** – the Christian ceremony commemorating the Last Supper in which the bread and wine are consumed. Catholics and some other denominations believe the bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Christ. Eucharist means thanksgiving.

**Franciscan order** – an order of brothers, priests, and nuns (sisters) founded in 1209 by St. Francis of Assisi. Sr. Ilia is a member of the OSF, or Order of St. Francis. Other Franciscan orders are Order of Friars Minor (OFM), Order of Saint Clare (OSC), and the Third Order of Saint Francis (lay people who take vows and follow prayer and life guidelines).

**Jesuit**- an order of brothers and priests of the Society of Jesus, founded by St. Ignatius and St. Francis Xavier in 1534. Known for their exceptional education. They direct high schools and universities. Many are scholars in specific fields.

**Liturgy** – a form of public religious worship. It represents a communal response to and participation in the sacred through activity reflecting praise, thanksgiving, supplication, or repentance. People sometimes use this term to refer to the celebration of Mass.

**Mass** – the main eucharistic liturgical service in many forms in Western Christianity used in the Catholic, Lutheran and sometimes Anglican, Methodist, Western Rite Orthodox and Old Catholic churches.

**Sacrament** – in Western Church a Christian ceremony or ritual regarded as imparting divine grace. It is a sacred honoring of events of life. In the Catholic church the seven sacraments are: baptism, confirmation, matrimony, holy orders (ordaining a priest), reconciliation, and anointing of the sick.