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SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

**THE THEOLOGY OF MYSTAGOGY IN CYRIL OF JERUSALEM: AN APPLICATION
IN THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ZARIA**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF IMMACULATE CONCEPTION SEMINARY SCHOOL OF
THEOLOGY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN THEOLOGY
CONCENTRATION IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY**

BY

PATRICK ADIKWU ODEH

SOUTH ORANGE, NEW JERSEY

DECEMBER 2021

APPROVAL PAGE

The thesis is submitted to the faculty of Immaculate Conception Seminary School of Theology for the Degree of Master of Arts in Theology with the concentration in Systematic Theology.

Rev. Msgr. Gerard McCarren, S.T.D.
(Supervisor)

Date

Rev. Lawrence Porter, Ph.D.
(Reader)

Date

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all the catechetical instructors of the Catholic Diocese of Zaria and to the men's ministry of St Paul's Church, Ramsey, New Jersey, USA.

ACKNOWLEDEMENTS

It is in God whom we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). I sincerely thank God for continuous guidance upon my life throughout the years of my academic pursuit in New Jersey, USA. I owe a debt of gratitude to my Bishop, His Lordship, Most Rev. Dr. George J. Dodo on whose recommendation I studied in the United States. Thanks to all the team of formators who serve at the Immaculate Conception Seminary School of Theology, South Orange, New Jersey, USA.

Thanks to my academic adviser; Fr. Christopher Ciccarino, to Diane M. Carr and all who really helped me to achieve my dreams. May God reward you all. My special thanks to my supervisor, Msgr. Gerard McCarren who patiently and enduringly corrected the manuscripts of this thesis and guided me all through it, and also to Fr. Lawrence Porter, who was an excellent for resource to my contributions.

I also extend my profound gratitude to Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of the Archdiocese of Newark with whose permission I stayed at St Paul Church in Ramsey New Jersey, USA. I will never forget to give thanks for Fr John Gabriel of St Paul Church Ramsey, the parochial vicars, Frs. Paul Houlis, Stephano Hong, and Hermes Diaz who made my stay at the rectory in Ramsey comfortable. To Deacon Tom Flanagan I say thank you. You are indeed a friend and brother; I really appreciate your constant prayers and encouragements. I will never forget also all the staff of St Paul Ramsey and the wonderful contributions towards my studies. May God richly bless you.

Finally, I am most grateful to the various families who also helped in one way or the another during my years of studies in New Jersey. I Fr. Patrick Adikwu Odeh, say: May bless you all.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of engaging in Mystagogy is to initiate people into the mystery of Christ by moving from the visible to the invisible. Mystagogy within the RCIA is to enable the newly baptized to gain more profound experiences of the paschal mystery and to live a personal experience.

It is of great importance for the Church today that the mystagogical preaching help all the baptized to deepen and expand their experience and understanding of both the rites of initiation and the Christian identity and mission that God gave Christians through the reception of the sacraments of initiation.

This thesis will attempt to investigate the mystagogy of Cyril of Jerusalem and apply his mystagogical methods to the Catholic Diocese of Zaria. In addition, this thesis will also draw from the wealth of experience of mystagogical teachings of some mystagogues like John Chrysostom, Ambrose of Milan and Theodore of Mopsuestia.

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CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age (Matthew 28: 19-20).

Since the time Jesus established the Great Commission, that is, sending out his co-workers into the world with the mandate of bringing people into a loving relationship with Him, the disciples travelled throughout the world to carry the message of the Gospel and invite people to encounter God's love through baptism. It is important to note that "making disciples is not reducible to winning converts or ensuring that people get baptized. A disciple is one who listens to Jesus (Matt 17:5) and learns from him how to live (Matt 11:28-30), how to pray (Matt 6:9-13). Christian discipleship is a total way of life, a commitment to pattern our daily actions and decisions after the example set by Jesus and His most heroic followers (see 1 Cor 11.1)."¹ The Church keeps responding to the Great Commission by inviting people to hear the good news (Gospel), to experience the true person of Jesus Christ and to be baptized, which leads to the lifelong commitment that has its beginning in the sacraments of initiation.

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is the practice that expresses the original command passed upon the Apostles and their successors which is a way that helps the Church in the attempt to carry on with the Great Commission. In 1974 the first English translation of the

¹ Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 371.

RCIA was promulgated; the Catholic Communities have found great pastoral wisdom in their implementation of the RCIA and from experience the Church has learned the values of the prescribed rite.

We have learned how unique and complex the movement of faith will be for every individual among the catechumens.² The first release of the typical Roman edition of the RCIA in 1972 incorporated many of the pastoral practices of the Church throughout the centuries. Ronald J. Lewinski notes: “It is true to say that what we now have available to us in the RCIA is in good part the restoration of ancient Church practice and this restoration was called for by the Second Vatican Council (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 64-66).”³ Ever since the promulgation of RCIA, the Church has found a plan or order of initiation most helpful for their pastoral ministry, which gives the Church a guide to help those who “after hearing the mystery of Christ proclaimed, consciously and freely seek the living God and enter the way of faith and conversion as the Holy Spirit opens their hearts.”⁴ The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is really a process that leads believers into the loving relationship with God and helps Christians to share in the sacramental character of Christ’s paschal mystery (passion, death and resurrection).

Christians in Nigeria live in a multi-religious context, many in a minority position, especially in northern Nigeria. The Christians in northern Nigeria experience persecution almost

² Ronald J. Lewinski, *An Introduction to the RCIA: The Vision of Christian Initiation* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2017), iv.

³ *Ibid.*, v.

⁴ Congregation for Divine Worship, *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, published by authority of Pope Paul VI, January 6, 1972, a new edition of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults approved for the use in the Dioceses of the United States of America by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and confirmed by the Apostolic See, (Mahwah, NJ: Catholic Book Publishing 1988), 3.

on a daily basis. Christians and houses of worship are attacked for no just reason. The attack on Christianity has hampered the faith of the people to the extent that some are beginning to opt for returning to African traditional religions. Thus, mystagogical catechesis becomes necessary in deepening the faith of the baptized. The challenges the persecution pose also call for a dutiful consciousness on the part of the mystagogical instructors: How can the Church help those with wavering faith not fall away from her? How can the Church explain the meaning of the Mysteries in a way that not only instructs the neophytes but also inspires and prepares them to live the Christian life even in the midst of persecution? I propose to explore how the mystagogical catechesis can be applied in deepening and fostering the faith of Catholics specifically in the Catholic Diocese of Zaria.

In an attempt to explore the last stage of the Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults (Mystagogy), the thesis seeks to explore the mystagogy of St. Cyril of Jerusalem and to seek how his mystagogical catechesis can help Christians in the Catholic Diocese of Zaria gain knowledge of the mystery by contemplating the mystery of Christ and come to deeper faith.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE THESIS

Mystagogy leads individuals to the mystery of God's love. Mystagogy is formally set as the last stage of the four processes of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, but "The *Ordo* implies a view of mystagogy that does not limit it to a final stage, but see it as running through the whole process of initiation."⁵ This can help Christians in the Catholic Diocese of Zaria.

⁵ David Regan, *Experience the Mystery: Pastoral Possibilities for Christian Mystagogy* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994), 31.

1.3 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study basically focuses on the theology of mystagogy in Cyril of Jerusalem and his methodology will be applied to the Catholic Diocese of Zaria. Though this study will be closely focused on Cyril of Jerusalem, it will also draw from the wisdom of other Church Fathers: Ambrose of Milan, Theodore of Mopsuestia and John Chrysostom.

1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This thesis aims to: 1) perform a review of Cyril's mystagogical theology; 2) consider the place of mystagogy within the context of the restored Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults; and 3) explore how St Cyril's mystagogical theology helps to serve as a pastoral tool for mystagogical instructors in the Diocese of Zaria, Nigeria.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will contribute to the improvement of teaching catechesis and help in leading Christians into deeper knowledge of God's mystery through application of the mystagogues' form of doing mystagogy. I hope that this research will help to serve as a pastoral tool for mystagogical instructors in the Catholic Diocese of Zaria.

1.6 THE METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

First, I will review Cyril's mystagogical theology using the catecheses themselves, assisted by Paul A. Boer's *Catechetical Lectures of St. Cyril of Jerusalem*, Enrico Mazza's *Mystagogy: A Theology of Liturgy in the Patristic Age*, Edward Yarnold's *Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation* and several others. Although I will contextualize Cyril's theology among other fourth century

mystagogues, especially Ambrose of Milan, John Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia, attention will remain focused on Cyril.

Second, I will offer a brief description of how mystagogy is done in the Catholic Diocese of Zaria; I will discuss the role of the mystagogue and the role of the Christian community. I will explore how Cyril's mystagogical theology of the fourth century helps to serve as a pastoral tool for mystagogical instructors in the Diocese of Zaria, Nigeria today. In addition, I will clearly establish how greater appreciation of sermons from Cyril's mystagogy of the fourth century can assist Catholics of Zaria in the twenty-first century.

1.7 THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This research paper contains five chapters which seek to explore the final period in the process of Christian Initiation of Adults into the Catholic Church that is the catechetical method known as mystagogy in the light of Cyril of Jerusalem's theology. Chapter One presents the general background which includes: introduction, the statement of the study, scope and limitations, aim and objective, the significance of the study, the methodology, the structure of the thesis, expected results and the understanding of the concept of mystagogy. Chapter Two contains a review of St Cyril's mystagogy. Chapter Three focuses on the mystagogical homilies of the fourth century church fathers Ambrose of Milan, John Chrysostom and Theodore Mopsuestia. Chapter Four indicates the mystagogical instructions in the Catholic Diocese of Zaria and the applications of the mystagogical methods of Cyril and other mystagogues in the Catholic Diocese of Zaria. Finally, Chapter Five contains recommendations and conclusions.

1.8 EXPECTED RESULT

Consideration of the mystagogy of Cyril of Jerusalem will shed light on the sacraments of Christian Initiation, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, the nature of mystagogy and Cyril's particular contribution to it. The mystagogical catechesis of Cyril will help provide the mystagogues in the Catholic Diocese of Zaria with much needed tools for guiding and fostering the faith. Mystagogical Instruction in the Diocese of Zaria, Nigeria will receive strength and much needed support, in view of the persecution of Christians, with a recovery of Cyril's mystagogy.

1.9 UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF MYSTAGOGY

In this thesis, there is need to define the concept of mystagogy which will be used during the course of this research so as to give the reader a clear understanding of the issue discussed.

1.9.1 The Etymology of Mystagogy

The term "mystagogy" derives from the Greek verb *mueo*, which is used in the sacred context meaning "to teach a doctrine." It also means "to initiate into the mysteries."⁶ Mystagogy is always closely connected with *mysterion*, *mystikos* and *mystes*.⁷ The root meaning of the word mystagogy suggests leading one initiated into the mystery or to be guided into the mystery which has the connotation in the Christian tradition of entry into the Mystery of Christianity.

The Greek Fathers gave two meanings to the word mystagogy: "First, is the 'performance of a sacred action' and in this action, it is particular to the celebration of the sacraments of initiation; secondly, 'oral or written explanation' of the mystery hidden in the scriptures and celebrated in the liturgy."⁸ In the understanding of Cyril of Alexandria and Maximus the

⁶ Enrico Mazza, *Mystagogy. A Theology of Liturgy in the Patristic Age* (New York: Pueblo Publishing, 1989), 1.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

Confessor, “Mystagogy is the performance of sacred action; in Theodore of Studios, mystagogy refers to the liturgical celebration; For Origen and Chrysostom, mystagogy means Christian initiation in general. In Epiphanius, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa, it means initiation into the Eucharist.”⁹ From the aforementioned: mystagogy can be said to be the catechetical instruction on the sacraments, with specific reference to the sacraments of initiation and to the deeper spiritual meaning and to the explanation of liturgical rites.

A term closely related term to mystagogy is *mystagogue*, which is the person who leads and introduces the candidate into the mystery. The *myste* simply refers to the person who is being initiated into the group of a certain cult which is an extension of the use of words from the sacred group or secret cult into the secular domain, which made it easier for the Church Fathers to make use of it.¹⁰ The Rite Christian Initiation of Adults states the essence of the period of mystagogy in nos. 244-245: “This is the time for the whole 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 and the neophytes are introduced into the fuller and more effective understanding of the mysteries through the Gospel....”¹¹

⁹ Ibid., 1-2.

¹⁰ Wibowo Budi Antonius, “Rediscovering Mystagogy through the History of Christianity,” *International Journal of Philosophy and Religion* 26, 3 (2010): 297-317.

¹¹ RCIA, no. 169.

CHAPTER TWO: A REVIEW OF CYRIL OF JERUSALEM'S MYSTAGOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Mystagogy had a strong place in Christianity: during the fourth century St Cyril contributed immensely through his mystagogical homilies. He offered instruction and explanation to the newly baptized on the mysteries into which they were initiated through his mystagogical catecheses. This chapter therefore will review St Cyril of Jerusalem's theology of mystagogy.

2.2 THE LIFE OF ST CYRIL OF JERUSALEM AND HIS WORKS

2.2.1 Life of St Cyril

Nothing much is known about the early life of Cyril of Jerusalem. It was generally agreed that he was born 315 AD at or near Jerusalem. Cyril was said to have been born of pious parents who professed the orthodox faith and was reared in the same faith and in the reign of Constantine. The date of his birth was said to be an educated guess that is based on Jerome's remark that Cyril held his *Catechetical Lectures* when still an adolescent.¹² Cyril received an excellent liberal education which formed the basis of his ecclesiastical culture, centered on study of the Bible. Cyril was probably ordained a deacon in the first half of the 330s by Bishop Macarius, the Bishop of Jerusalem at that time, and ordained a priest some thirteen years later, c. 343, by Maximus the successor of Macarius.¹³ Cyril succeeded as the bishop in the year c. 350. The date of his consecration is approximately determined by his own letter to Constantius concerning the appearance of a luminous cross in the sky at Jerusalem. The letter was written on the 7th of May,

¹² Jan Willem Drijvers, *Cyril of Jerusalem: Bishop and City* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), 31.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 32.

351, and is described by Cyril as the first fruits of his episcopate. He must therefore have been consecrated in 350 or 351.¹⁴ The cross was bright as the sun; it hung over the hill of Golgotha and extended to Mount Olivet, being visible for many hours. The whole population of Jerusalem, citizen and foreigners, Christians and Pagans, young and old flocked to the Church singing the praises of Christ and hailing the phenomenon as a sign from heaven confirming the truth of the Christian religion.¹⁵ Cyril saw this occasion as an important moment for announcing to the Emperor Constantius the began of his Episcopate; and an extant letter described the sign as a proof of God's favour towards the Empire and its Christian ruler. The piety of his father Constantine had been rewarded by the discovery of the true Cross and the holy places; now the greater devotion of the Son had won a signal manifestation of Divine approval.¹⁶ Some sources stated that Cyril became the successor of Maxiumus after he died; Socrates and Sozomen inform us that Acacius, Bishop of Caesarea (341-365) and metropolitan of the Church-province of Palestine, managed together with Patrophilus, Bishop of Scythopolis to eject Maximus and have Cyril installed in Jerusalem. Acacius and Patrophilus were known for their Arian views, while Maxiumus suggested him to the creed of Nicaea. During the Council of Serdica (343), Maxiumus joined the supporters of Athanasius and brought back the opponent of Arius to communion and Athanasius was accepted into the body of the faithful.¹⁷ Cyril had conflicts with Acacius not only in the field of doctrine but also in that of justification, because he claimed his own See to be autonomous from the Metropolitan See of Caesarea. Cyril went into exile on three occasions within twenty years: the

¹⁴ Paul A. Boer, *The Catechetical Lectures of St. Cyril of Jerusalem*: (Dublin: Veritatis Splendor Publication 2014), 18.

¹⁵ Ibid., 20.

¹⁶ Ibid., 20.

¹⁷ Ibid, 32.

first was in 357, after being deposed by a synod of Jerusalem; the second was in 360, instigated by Acacius; and the third was the longest which lasted eleven years during the reign of the Philo-Arian Emperor Valens. In 370, when the Emperor died, Cyril gained freedom and resumed possession of his See and restored unity and peace to his faithful.¹⁸ Cyril died March 18, 386, which is the date of his feast day which both the Eastern and Western calendars maintain.

2.2.2 Cyril's Works

Apart from his Catechetical Lectures, Cyril is said to have written the following works: (i) the Letter to the emperor Constantius concerning the appearance of a luminous Cross in the sky at Jerusalem; (ii) The homily on the paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda; and (iii) Fragments of sermons on the miracle of the water changed into wine, and on John 16:28, "I go to My Father." The following works were attributed to both Cyril of Jerusalem and Cyril of Alexandria: Homily De Occursu Domini, that is, On the Presentation of Christ in the Temple and the meeting with Symeon, called in the Greek Church the Upapante¹⁹

2.2.3 The Structure of Cyril's Mystagogical Catechesis

Cyril of Jerusalem wrote twenty-four catechetical lectures given to catechumens in Jerusalem being prepared for baptism and after baptism that are best considered in two parts. Introduced by a Procatechesis of welcome, the first eighteen lectures are commonly known as the Catechetical Lectures, Catechetical Orations or Catechetical Homilies, while the last five are

¹⁸ Pope Benedict XVI, *Church Fathers from Clement of Rome to Augustine* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2008), 64-5.

¹⁹ Boer, 144-145.

called the Mystagogical Catecheses because they deal with the mysteries, i.e., the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist. The Catechetical Lectures were delivered by Cyril of Jerusalem as the Bishop about 350 AD.

The first lecture was in the corpus the “Procatechesis,” which unlike the Catecheses proper, was addressed to the catechumens in the presence of the whole congregation and is introductory. Here, Cyril stresses the gravity of the step which the candidates are about to take and draws out the need for repentance and due preparation. Cyril warns them that the very graces which baptism brings will strengthen the determination of the power of evil to ensnare them. The Procatechesis was delivered in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.²⁰ The first lectures (nos 1-5) treat respectively, the prerequisites for Baptism, conversation from pagan morals, the Sacraments of Baptism, and the ten dogmatic truths contained in the Creed or the Symbol of the faith. The next catecheses (nos. 6-18) forms an “ongoing catechesis” on the Jerusalem Creed in Arian tones. The last five are called “Mystagogical Catecheses”: the first two develop a commentary on the rites of baptism, and the last three focus on the Chrism, the Body and Blood of Christ, and the Eucharistic Liturgy. They include an explanation of the Our Father (*Oratio dominica*).²¹

2.3 JERUSALEM IN THE FOURTH CENTURY

During the fourth century, Jerusalem became an important city in the Christian Metropolis because it went through tremendous transformation from an insignificant provincial town to become a prominent Christian city with a correspondent architectural splendor of Churches and monasteries. Jerusalem became a central place during the fourth century because of the presence of the increasing number of holy sites and it attracted great numbers of pilgrims. In the first

²⁰ Ibid., 65.

²¹ Ibid.

centuries, the religious character of Jerusalem changed from being the famous center of the world of Judaism; after 135 it became a Hellenic city with pagan sanctuaries and cult.²² There was a change from the pagan city into a Christian city and gradually pagan shrines were replaced with churches in the fourth century. In 70 A.D, Jerusalem was demolished by Emperor Titus; then in 135, after the final revolt led by Simon Bar-Kochba, who claimed to be a new Messiah (132-135), Hadrian commanded it destroyed and renamed it Aelia Capitolina. Constantine was responsible for its rebirth and the establishment of the holy places in the fourth century, based on memories handed down by the Christian community.²³ Through the initiative that Constantine took, Church building continued in the fourth century and Jerusalem's urban space saw an increase in Christian architecture. The Mount of Olives was a particularly popular building site.

There was certainly a strong presence of Christianity in Jerusalem and its immediate surroundings in the fourth century. Christianity gained control over Jerusalem and in the urban areas there were churches and monasteries, and the topography of the city was Christianized because of the rapid growth of holy sites, and pilgrims and clergymen became part and parcel of the street scene. Due to the growth of Christianity Jerusalem became a cosmopolitan city full of hustle and bustle; as Cyril stated there were "multitudes of strangers from all parts of the world that thronged the streets of Jerusalem."²⁴

Jerome's letter to Paulinus of Nola in 395 addressed the liveliness of Jerusalem, which he did not like. He called Jerusalem a crowded city with prostitutes, actors, jesters and everything that is usually found in other cities; every race of the world was gathered there and there were so many

²² Drijvers, 1.

²³Nicole Chareyron & David W. Wilson, *Pilgrims to Jerusalem in the Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 79.

²⁴ Drijvers, 28.

people from both sexes that one had to endure in Jerusalem what one sought to escape elsewhere.²⁵ In the early 380s, Jerome visited Jerusalem and gave the same picture by saying Jerusalem was a city full of sin and evildoing, which included fornication, prostitution, incest, murder, theft, poisoning and idolatry.²⁶ In his *Mystagogical Catecheses*, Cyril likened the city of Jerusalem to theater performances by actors and dancers, chariot races in the hippodrome, and wild-beast and gladiatorial shows. He instructed the neophytes that what is expected of them as Christians is to run away from such attitudes, which are the work of Satan.²⁷ Cyril also encouraged his audience not to eat sacrificial food or participate in festivals, to have nothing to do with temples where lifeless images are venerated, and not to light lamps or burn incense by springs or streams and to avoid idol worship. This was the situation of the city of Jerusalem where Cyril lived, preached, instructed, and baptized catechumens.

2.4 LITURGY DURING THE TIME OF CYRIL OF JERUSALEM

Among his notable and significant experiences of creativity in Jerusalem during the fourth century is its development on liturgy. According to Jan Drijvers, “Cyril was responsible for the evolution of the rite and expansion of the liturgy as they took place in the fourth century, and Jerusalem was an exporter of its liturgical practices to the rest of the Christian world.”²⁸ Given the fact of the differences in the description of liturgical practices with regard to instruction given to the candidates of baptism, it was hard to establish whether Cyril was totally responsible for the development of the liturgical practices. Cyril spent long periods in exile and most likely some pilgrims introduced their own liturgical customs in Jerusalem. Owing to the fact of the prominence

²⁵Ibid., 28-29.

²⁶Ibid., 29.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 73.

of the Holy Sites in Jerusalem and the role Cyril as the bishop of Jerusalem played, it can certainly be said that he influenced the liturgical practices in Jerusalem. Drijvers noted: “The expansion of the liturgical practice in Jerusalem during Cyril’s episcopate most likely accounts for the differences between Egeria’s description of an eight-week Lent with seven weeks of daily catechetical instruction on Scripture and the Creed, and that of Cyril’s Procatechesis and eighteen Catechetical Lectures that mainly concentrate on the Creed alone for which no Lenten period of eight weeks was necessary.”²⁹ Before Cyril’s Lectures, the duration of the liturgical practice in Jerusalem lasted for three weeks and sometimes for eight weeks; this is because liturgical practice was still in the process of development. With the Catechetical Lectures, Cyril offered a complete cycle of pre-baptismal instructions which centers on the Creed and extended the duration to forty days. Cyril focused on repentance especially as he addressed the baptismal candidates. The liturgical practice in Jerusalem was further developed after the death of Cyril in 387 AD.

2.5 MYSTAGOGY IN CYRIL OF JERUSALEM’S THEOLOGY

In the fourth century, Cyril of Jerusalem was one of the major contributors on the theology of mystagogy. In fact David Regan noted that “the sermons of Cyril have often been considered the archetype of mystagogical homilies, though more recently they are seen to be only one approach to mystagogy among several others.”³⁰ Each of the Church Fathers in the cycle of mystagogy centered on explaining to the newly baptized both the theological and spiritual importance of the various liturgical rites, symbols and gestures of the sacraments of initiation in relation to the mystery of Christ so as to lead them into deeper understanding of the meaning of

²⁹ Ibid., 74.

³⁰ Regan, 15.

the mysteries that are celebrated. Cyril's mystagogical catechesis contains guides to the neophytes to the mysteries into which they have entered which start from the experience of liturgy and interpret the rites being celebrated particularly according to the genre of typology.

What happens at baptism?

There is the renunciation of the devil. The rite of baptism starts with the *photizomenoi* (those to be enlightened) led to the vestibule of the baptistery facing the West; they renounce Satan and all his pomps. Then turning to face the East they are stripped of clothing (a likeness to the first formed Adam). For Cyril, facing of West was necessary because the West is the place of darkness and Satan being darkness has his dominion also in darkness (MC 1:4) so therefore the candidates look towards the West with a symbolic meaning: "renounce that dark and gloomy-potentate" (MC1:4)

There is the profession of faith. After the renunciation, the candidates then turned to the East and professed their faith. The importance of the turning to the East during the profession of faith is that the East is the place of light, which signified a complete separation with the devil. There is the anointing with the exorcised oil. The candidates will receive a pre-baptismal anointing from head to toe with exorcised oil (a charm to drive away every trace of hostile influence). In *Mystagogical Catecheses II, 3* Cyril states the reason for the exorcised oil: "this exorcised oil receives such virtue by the invocation of God and by prayer, as not only to burn and cleanse away the traces of sins, but also to chase away all the invisible power of the evil one."³¹

There is baptism by immersion. The pre-baptismal anointing immediately precedes the water bath. *Mystagogical Catecheses II, 4* clearly states: "After these things, you are led to the

³¹Boer, 658.

holy pool of divine baptism, as Christ was carried from cross to the Sepulcher which is before our eyes. And you were asked whether he or she believed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit... and descended three times into the water and ascended again; here also hinting by a symbol at the three days of burial of Christ... the water of salvation was at once your grace and your mother.”³²

There is baptismal chrismation. After the baptism proper there is the baptismal anointing with the *chrisma or myron* (aromatic oil) on the forehead, ear, nostrils and breast; each has its symbolical effect: “The forehead that they shall delivered from shame, the ear that they may receive divine mysteries, the nostrils that they may receive the sacred ointment to know and proclaim the sweet savor of Christ and the breast that may receive the armor to stand against the wiles of the devil (MC, III, 4).”³³

In his *Mystagogical Catecheses*, Cyril used the following terminologies to express his typology: imitation, symbol, likeness and antitypos.

Symbol: In an attempt to explain the liturgical rites to the neophytes and to lead them into understanding the mysteries into which they have entered, “Cyril regards the rite as the place where the individual achieves identification with Christ.”³⁴ Cyril is well known for use of typology that interprets the liturgy as an imitation of the saving work performed by Christ. Since for Cyril rites belong to the order of symbol (but not in the modern sense of this word as the external, aspect of the liturgy), when the candidates renounce Satan, they turn to the West, since the West is the place of darkness; they look to the West “symbolically” to show the connection between darkness and

³² Edward Yarnold, *Cyril of Jerusalem* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 107.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Enrico Mazza, *Mystagogy: A Theology of Liturgy in the Patristic Age* (New York: Pueblo, 1989), 154.

Satan. At the completion of the rite of renunciation, the candidates turn to the East, the side of light, in order to make their profession of Trinitarian faith.³⁵ There is also powerful symbolism with the oil of the anointing; just as by the invocation of the power of the Holy Spirit (epiclesis) ordinary bread and wine changes from being simple bread and wine into the Body the Blood of Christ so, too at the invocation, the holy perfume is no longer a common perfume but the gift of Christ. Therefore, as a sacramental, the perfume is used symbolically for anointing on the forehead and the various senses. Cyril in his *Mystagogical Catecheses* considers the threefold immersion of the candidates into the water as a symbol of Christ's three days in the tomb (MC, II, 4).

In Cyril's analysis there is also the use of *likeness* to explain to the newly baptized the mystery into which they have entered. Cyril applied the Pauline theology of baptism of Romans 6:5 as likeness of Christ's death: "As Christ was in reality crucified, buried and raised so you are in baptism accounted worthy of being crucified and raised together with Him in a likeness" (MC, III, 2). Baptism therefore is seen as death but in a different sense, namely death in likeness. While the death of Christ is seen in the usual sense of bodily death, our death in baptism is in likeness because our death is not bodily death but baptismal death.

The use of *antitypos* in baptism is connected with the word "likeness" (*homoionoma*). Cyril responded to those who claimed that John's baptism brought only the forgiveness of sins or adoption as God's children by asserting that baptism is also an *antitypos* of the suffering of Christ. Also, if Christians receive "the sacrament" (*to antitypon*) of the Holy Spirit, they became images of Christ, for the anointing with chrism that follows the baptismal bath is the *antitypon* with which Christ was anointed. Cyril explained the sacramental importance of *antitypon*, which ensures the

³⁵ Ibid.,155.

identity between the descent of the Holy Spirit on Christ and the sacramental descent of the Spirit on Christians.³⁶

For Cyril, imitation is strongly linked to the idea of identity. Imitation in Cyril's usage is defined as a sacramentality that deals with the internal and invisible dimension of the celebration and not the external, ritual, visible aspect of the celebration. Like Cyril, John Chrysostom also affirms the meaning of imitation and says that the behavior of the baptized should be an imitation of their profession of faith. Chrysostom states: "The faithful should reproduce outwardly, in their behavior, the baptismal 'godliness' that consists in their covenant with God; from this it follows that the good works done by Christians are an offshoot of their baptism. These good works include 'yearning for the world to come' and 'keeping our gaze ever straining upward, so that we are ever anxious for the things of heaven and desire the glory of hereafter.'"³⁷

In Christian Initiation, the Eucharist is the final stage and the pinnacle of the initiation process. Cyril's Mystagogical Catecheses offer explanations for the liturgical practices that occur during this last process of initiation. In Mystagogical Catecheses IV Cyril speaks of the union or oneness of the newly baptized with Christ in the mystery into which they have been admitted: "You become one body with Christ (Eph 3:6) and one blood with Christ... for Christ himself said of the bread: 'this is my body... and of the wine: this is my blood.'"³⁸ The Eucharist is seen as the place where the newly baptized are made one with Christ. In Mystagogical Catecheses V on the Sacred Liturgy and Communion (MC, V, 2-20), Cyril gives the idea of the structure of the anaphora in Jerusalem as follows: washing of hands as the symbol of purity from sinful and

³⁶ Ibid., 160.

³⁷ Ibid., 122.

³⁸ Boer, 102.

unlawful deeds, for the hands are a symbol of purity and blamelessness of our conduct (MC V, 1); the kiss of peace which signifies that our souls are mingled together and banish all remembrance of wrongs (MC V, 2-3); the hymn of praise and the Sanctus, an epiclesis (MC V, 7-11) and the intercessions and the examination of the Lord Prayer (MC V 12-20).³⁹ For Cyril unlike other Church Fathers of the fourth century, typology is of great importance and is a key element in his theological method. Through the application of typology, Cyril connects the Old Testament and the New Testament in relation to his explanation of the liturgical rites. In his homily on baptism, for example, Cyril makes use of Old Testament typology; the rite of renunciation of Satan is seen as the events of the Exodus: the wickedness of Pharaoh, the sending of Moses by God in order to free the Israelites from slavery, the blood of the lamb put on the door the post of Hebrews and the crossing of the Red Sea.⁴⁰

2.6 THE RESTORATION OF RCIA: THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

The first major official document of the Second Vatican Council was *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy; this document led the way for the Council's entire work. Patrick Cornin states, "The themes for *Sacrosanctum Concilium* were: renewed pastoral concerns; an emphasis on missionary adaptation; desire for liturgy in the vernacular; desire for a clarified and simplified rite."⁴¹ There are two paramount aspects of this document: (i) *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 14, "That all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious and active participation in the liturgical celebration which is demanded by the very nature of the

³⁹ Boer, 678-685.

⁴⁰ Mazza, 161.

⁴¹ Patrick Cornin, "The Development of Mystagogy by the Post-Vatican: The Coetus XXII," *The Australasian Catholic Record*; Stathfield 89, Iss. 4 (October 2012): 433-443.

liturgy...”;⁴² and (ii) the Council at this point in time called for the restoration of the adult catechumenate to the Church in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 64: “The catechumenate for adults, comprising several distinct steps, is to be restored and to be put into use at the discretion of the local ordinary. By this means the period of the catechumenate, which is intended as a time of suitable instruction, may be sanctified by sacred rites to be celebrated at successive intervals.”⁴³ The Council also directed attention to Confirmation in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no.71: “The rite of confirmation is to be revised and the intimate connection which this sacrament has with the whole of Christian initiation is to be more clearly set forth; for this reason it is fitting for candidates to renew their baptismal promises just before they confirmed.”⁴⁴ With respect to Baptism the council affirmed: “The rite of baptism of adults was to be revised in the light of this restoration for adults... and the rites of baptism of children was to be revised, taking into account the fact that those to be baptized are infants.”⁴⁵ Aidan Kavanagh underscores the importance of the restoration of the Rite of Christian of Adults: “...the restored rites of adult initiation lies therefore less in its ceremonial details than in its strategic vision of the Church local and universal. It is a practicable vision of what the Church is and can become through the continuing renewal process of evangelization, conversion, catechesis and the paschal sacraments of Christian initiation.”⁴⁶

2.6.1. The Three Sacraments of Initiation

In the Spirit of the Second Vatican Council, especially the idea of *ressourcement* (return to the sources), the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) promulgated in 1972 reformed more

⁴² *Sacrosanctum Concilium* in *The Documents of Vatican II*, Vatican Translation (New York: St Paul Publication 2009), 96.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 109.

⁴⁴ *SC no.71*.

⁴⁵ *SC no. 66- 67*.

⁴⁶ Aidan Kavanagh, *The Shape of Baptism: The Rites of Christian Initiation* (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company 1978), 127.

than a thousand years of initiatory practice and attitude.⁴⁷ The three Sacraments of initiation, Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist, according to the General Introduction of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, no.2, “closely combine to bring us, the faithful of Christ, to his full stature and to enable us to carry out the mission of the entire people of God in the Church and in the world.”⁴⁸ This Christian Initiation is accomplished by the means of the sacraments which established the foundations of Christian life... “where the faithful born anew by Baptism are strengthened by Confirmation and are nourished by the Eucharist, the food of eternal life.⁴⁹” To show how connected these three Sacraments are Pope Benedict XVI in his 2007 Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation asserted: “It must never be forgotten that our reception of Baptism and Confirmation is ordered to the Eucharist. The Sacrament of Baptism, by which we are conformed to Christ, incorporated in the Church and made children of God, is the portal to all sacraments... it is our participation in the Eucharistic sacrifice which perfects within us the gifts given to us at Baptism.”⁵⁰

2.6.2. Sacrament of Baptism

The sacrament of baptism is the first sacrament of Christian Initiation and it is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gate to life in the Spirit and the door which gives access to the other sacraments.⁵¹ At reception of the sacrament of baptism, Christians are freed from sin, become the true children of God, become part of Christ’s body, the Church, and share in the mission of

⁴⁷ William Harmless, SJ, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996), 1.

⁴⁸ *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, xv.I

⁴⁹ *Catechism of Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1994), nos. 1212-1275.

⁵⁰ Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Church’s Life and Mission, *Sacramentum Caritatis* (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2007), no. 17.

⁵¹ CCC, no. 1213.

Jesus. In the words of John Chrysostom's theology of Baptism; "Baptism takes away sins, gives the Holy Spirit, and makes us the body of Christ."⁵² Through the 'washing regeneration and the renewal by Holy Spirit'⁵³ and "the enlightenment"⁵⁴ in Baptism, Chrysostom asserts "believers... are thereby already committed to God and all conditions have been met and they have now become worthy of approaching the royal banquet table, that is the Eucharist."⁵⁵

2.6.3. Sacrament of Confirmation

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church: "The Sacrament of Confirmation, as part of Christian Initiation, is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. The baptized, through the reception of the sacrament are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed."⁵⁶ This sacrament is conferred on the baptized: "by laying on of hands the gift of the Spirit that completes the grace of baptism... The imposition of hands is rightly recognized by the Catholic tradition as the origin of the sacrament of confirmation..."⁵⁷ In the Old Testament, the prophet Isaiah declared the resting of the Spirit of the Lord upon the Messiah (cf. Isa 11:2; 61:1) and in the New Testament, the Lucan account presents to us the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus at His baptism by John during His baptism at the River Jordan (cf. Lk 4:16-22, Mk 1:9 and Mt 3:13). In addition, during the ministry of the apostles, the Holy Spirit was present who helped carry out the mighty works of God (cf. Acts 2).

⁵² Mazza, 117.

⁵³ CCC, no. 1214.

⁵⁴ Ibid., no. 1215.

⁵⁵ Ibid., no. 117.

⁵⁶ Ibid., no. 1285.

⁵⁷ Ibid., no. 1288.

The Holy Spirit played a pivotal role at the beginning and throughout the ministry of Jesus and the apostles.

2.6.4. Sacrament of the Eucharist

The final stage of the three Sacraments of Christian Initiation is the Eucharist: it is the fullness of the Christian Initiation, and it is seen as the completion of the process of Christian Initiation. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, relying on Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 11, asserts that the "Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life and all other sacraments are bound up with this Eucharist and oriented toward it."⁵⁸ Commenting on the Eucharist and Christian Initiation, Pope Benedict XVI in his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis* affirms:

The sacrament of baptism, by which we were conformed to Christ, incorporated in the Church and made children of God, is the portal to all the sacraments... it is our participation in the sacrifice which perfects within us the gifts given to us at baptism. The gifts of the Spirit are given for the building up of Christ's body (1 Cor 12) and for the ever-greater witness to the Gospel in the world. The Holy Eucharist, then, brings Christian initiation to completion and represents the central goal of all the sacramental life.⁵⁹

For John Chrysostom, the purpose of the Eucharist is to help in sustaining and augmenting the strength needed for the struggle against the demon and his manifestations (his "pomps") and to show forth the magnificence of the baptismal calling.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ CCC, no. 1324.

⁵⁹ Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, no. 17.

⁶⁰ Mazza, 117.

2.6.5 The Structure of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

Prior to this structure of the RCIA, the New Testament period has this basic initiatory structure: “The proclamation of the Gospel, the conversion of faith (this is the normal response of those who have heard the Gospel proclaimed), baptism (the Gospel proclaimed and believed usually results in the water of bath) and there are events that follow baptism as recorded in Acts 2:42: ‘And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching (*didache*), and fellowship (*koinonia*), to the breaking of bread and prayers.”⁶¹ In other words, the whole process of initiation during the apostolic period has its end in the spirit-filled community living by teaching, unity, sharing, witnessing and prayers. This structure of the Rite of Christian Initiation is established for the “adults who after hearing the mystery of Christ proclaimed consciously and freely seek the living God and enter the way of faith and conversion as the Holy Spirit opens their hearts.”⁶² The structure of the RCIA has four distinct periods and three rituals which serve as steps marking the transition from one period to the next.

PERIOD OF EVANGELIZATION AND PRECATECHUMENATE

This is a time, of no fixed duration or structure, for inquiry and introduction to Gospel values, an opportunity for the beginning of faith. This is the time of evangelization where faithfully and constantly the living God is proclaimed and Jesus as Christ whom he has sent for the salvation of all (cf RCIA, no.36).⁶³

FIRST STEP: ACCEPTANCE INTO THE ORDER OF CATECHUMENS

⁶¹Kavanagh, 20-22.

⁶² RCIA, no. 1.

⁶³ Ibid., no. 17.

RCIA, no. 41 states: "...Assembling publicly for the first time, the candidates who have completed the period of the pre-catechumenate declare their intention to the Church and the Church in turn, carrying out its apostolic mission, accepts them as persons who intend to become its members..."⁶⁴ This first step is of great importance because 'the beginnings of the spiritual life and the fundamentals of Christian teaching have taken root in the candidates. There must be first evidence of the first faith conceived during the period of evangelization, and the initial conversion and intention to change their lives; there must be evidence of the first stirrings of repentance, a start to the practice of calling upon God in prayer, a sense of the Church ... (RCIA, no. 42).⁶⁵

In summary, the rite of acceptance into the Order of the Catechumenate includes two major aspects: the receiving of the candidates and the Liturgy of the Word. During the receiving of the candidates the following are carried out: Greeting, opening dialogue, candidates' first acceptance of the Gospel, affirmation by the sponsors and the assembly, signing of the forehead, (and optionally for the other senses), concluding prayer and invitation to the celebration of the word of God. During the Liturgy of the Word the following are implemented: introduction, reading, homily, optionally the presentation of the Bible, prayer over the catechumens and dismissal of the catechumens.

PERIOD OF THE CATECHUMENATE

This is the time, corresponding to the progress of the individuals, for the nurturing and growth of the catechumens' faith and conversion to God; the celebration of the word and the prayer of exorcism and the prayer of blessing are meant to assist the process.⁶⁶ This period has the

⁶⁴ Ibid, no. 19.

⁶⁵ Ibid., no. 42.

⁶⁶ Ibid., no. 41.

following rites: celebrations of the word of God, minor exorcisms, blessings of the catechumens, anointing of the catechumens, prayer over the catechumens and dismissal from Mass after the homily.

SECOND STEP: ELECTION OR ENROLLMENT OF NAMES

This is the liturgical rite, usually celebrated on the first Sunday of Lent, by which the Church formally ratifies the catechumens' readiness for the sacraments of initiation and the catechumens, now the elect, express the will to receive these sacraments. During this rite one experiences: Liturgy of the word, presentation of the catechumens, affirmation by the Godparents and the assembly, invitation and enrollment of names, act of admission or election, intercessions for the elect, prayer over the elect and the dismissal of the elect.

PERIOD OF PURIFICATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT

This is the time immediately preceding the elect's initiation, usually the Lenten season preceding the celebration of this initiation at the Easter Vigil; it is a time of reflection, intensely centered on conversion, marked by celebration of the scrutinies, the presentations of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer and the preparation rites on Holy Saturday.⁶⁷

THE STEPS: CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

At this step of the liturgical rites, the climax of the RCIA period, integrated into the Easter Vigil, the elect are initiated through Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. Now they are Christians. This is the most important Liturgy of the entire liturgical year.

⁶⁷ Ibid., no.16.

PERIOD OF POST-BAPTISMAL CATECHESIS OR MYSTAGOGY

The last stage in the process of initiation is the post-baptismal catechesis of mystagogy. This is the time that follows the celebration of the initiation, during which the neophytes experience being fully part of the Christian community by means of both pertinent catechesis and particularly by participation with all the faithful in the Sunday Eucharistic celebration.⁶⁸

2.6.6. Conclusion

In studying the processes of Christian Initiation and the way of explaining the Rites to the neophytes, it is worthy of note that the Mystagogical Catecheses, also known as the Jerusalem Catecheses, during the fourth century in Jerusalem was generally attributed to Cyril, although some were attributed to his successor, John. Through his mystagogical catecheses, St Cyril was able to establish the process of explaining the mystery which was celebrated for the neophytes and formation of faith in Jerusalem. Cyril's mystagogy has pastoral dimensions that help Christians to be able to live an ongoing baptismal life and continuously to build a baptismal community.

⁶⁸ Ibid., no.16.

CHAPTER THREE

MYSTAGOGICAL HOMILIES OF AMBROSE OF MILAN, JOHN CHRYSOSTOM AND THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA AND THEIR ROLE IN THE ONGOING CATECHESIS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Prior to the fourth century usage of the word “mystagogy,” it was extensively used by the early Christian community. The access to mystagogy in the early Christianity developed with the conversion of Constantine, whereby Christianity was firmly established and shifted gradually from a proscribed sect to the official imperial religion by the edict of Theodosius in 380.⁶⁹ Notably, “The intake of new members required some shifting process and formal ritual of entry during the century of persecution. At that moment, the conversions to Christianity for unworthy motives were understandably, rare. The language and experiential approach of initiation for adult converts were borrowed from the mystery religions which had long experience with their own candidates.”⁷⁰ David Regan observes that Christian mystagogy is known to us chiefly through the homilies preached by bishops (Fathers of the Church) Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose of Milan, John Chrysostom, and others, who explained to the newly baptized the experience undergone during the preparation for and Easter celebration of baptism, chrism and Eucharist. Lent and Easter week was the usual time for the mystagogic homilies.⁷¹ The Church Fathers see mystagogy as a foundation on which one enters and walks in communion with God. In this period of the Church mystagogy is equated with Easter, with the “mysteries” celebrated in the rites of initiation at the vigil: Baptism, Chrismation and Eucharist. These mystagogical homilies attempt to reveal in depth what the

⁶⁹ David Regan, *Experience the Mystery: Pastoral Possibilities for Christian Mystagogy* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994), 14.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 14.

⁷¹ Ibid., 14-15.

neophytes experienced in the actual celebration of the mysteries. This chapter seeks to offer a theological reflection on the mystagogical homilies of Ambrose of Milan, John Chrysostom and Theodore of Mospuestia and their contributions to ongoing catechesis.

3.2 AMBROSE OF MILAN (d.391)

Ambrose was a late fourth century bishop of Milan, who contributed to the shape of the rites and the theology of Christian initiation during his time. Ambrose offered his homilies after the neophytes had received the sacraments. He said at the beginning of the sermons on the sacraments: “I shall begin now to speak of the sacraments which you have received. It was not proper for me to do so before this because, for the Christian, faith must come first. That is why, at Rome, the baptized are called the faithful and our father Abraham was made just not by his works but by faith. So, you were baptized and came to believe.”⁷²

Ambrose’s explanation of Christian Initiation, his mystagogical catechesis, can be found in *De Sacramentis* and *De Mysteriis* (both of which are dated ca. 380-390). Edward Yarnold observed that “The six sermons that comprise the *De Sacramentis* were probably preached in the week after Easter about 391. The liturgical details they preserve are especially valuable, but perhaps the most striking thing about them is the bold use that Ambrose makes of the allegorical method of interpreting scriptures.”⁷³ Ambrose offered his homilies after the neophytes had received the sacraments. The reason for giving his mystagogical homilies after the reception of the sacraments was the neophytes were not considered worthy or ready for the explanation of what

⁷² Ibid., 15.

⁷³ Edward Yarnold, *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation: The Origins of the RCIA*, 2nd ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994), 98.

was done at liturgy until they had participated in the whole ceremony. Offering the explanations after his hearers had experienced sacramental initiation, Ambrose believed they will easily make connections to the reality of the rituals that were celebrated. In the *De Sacramentis* he gave the theological meaning of the celebrated rites. At the opening instruction, the mysteries of the opening were celebrated when the bishop touched the ears and the nostrils of the candidates. What does the touching of ears and nostrils mean? Ambrose gives the meaning of the touching of the ears and nostrils by connecting it with the story of the deaf and mute man who was brought to Jesus, who touched his ears and mouth and said: *Ephphetha*, a Hebrew word for “be opened” (Mark 7:34). The reason for the touch of the ears was that they might be opened to the word of God and to the preaching of the priest. The reason for the touch on the mouth was to enable the recipient to speak of the heavenly mysteries; he/she receives from Christ the power of speech. Why the nostrils? The bishop touches the nostrils so that the recipient may receive the sweet fragrance of the eternal goodness so that you can say what the holy apostles said: “We are the aroma of God” (2 Cor. 2:15) so that the full fragrance of faith and devotion may dwell in you.⁷⁴ At the place of baptism the candidates went in and were anointed as Christ’s athlete (DS 1.4). Why the anointing? As Christ’s athletes, the recipients were being prepared for an earthly wrestling-match and have agreed to take on their opponents. The wrestler has something to hope for; every contest has its trophy. For Christians their trophy is that of Christ. During the renunciation of sin, the neophytes were asked, “Do you renounce the devil and his works?” The reply was “I renounce.” “Do you renounce the world and all its pleasures?” The reply was “I renounce.” Ambrose urges the recipients to keep

⁷⁴ Ibid., 101.

what they said in mind because the term of guarantee they gave must never fade away from their memories. To buttress his point, he said:

If you give a man your note of hand, you incur a liability, if you want to receive his money. You are held to your obligation; the money-lender holds you to it if you seek to escape from it. If you refuse to admit to it, you go before the judge, and there you are convicted on the evidence of your note of hand.⁷⁵

In the *De Sacramentis*; 2.16, he explained the meaning of the symbolism of water: You come to the water and you went into it. Naaman the Syrian came to mind as his leprosy was cleansed after entering the water (cf. 2 Kings 5:1-14). Like Naaman who at first doubted the value of entering the water, the recipient also came to the baptistery wondering what was happening here. Ambrose said: “You saw the water, you saw the bishop, you saw the Levites. You saw all you could see with the eyes of the body, all that is open to the human sight. You saw what is seen, but not what is done. What is unseen is much greater than what is seen: because the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal”⁷⁶

In the *De Sacramentis* 2:20, Ambrose offered the questions the recipients were asked: “‘Do you believe in the God the Father almighty?’ The response is ‘I believe,’ and you were immersed... you were asked again, ‘Do you believe in our Jesus Christ.?’ And you said, ‘I believe,’ and you were immersed.... And the third time you were asked, ‘Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?’ and you were immersed the third time.”⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Ibid., 102.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 104.

⁷⁷ Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation* (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, Pueblo Book, 1999), 171.

Ambrose in his baptismal instructions utilized the allegorical methods to explain what happened at the reception of the sacraments of the newly baptized. He did this during the week after their baptism at the Easter Vigil.

3.3 JOHN CHRYSOSTOM (d.407)

John Chrysostom preached his baptismal homilies prior to the reception of the sacraments, unlike Cyril of Jerusalem and Ambrose of Milan, but reserved his homilies on the Eucharist for the catechumens after they were fully initiated by participating in the Mass and receiving Holy Communion. John Chrysostom sees baptism as a burial and a resurrection: the old self is buried with Christ to sin and the new nature rises from the dead, “which is being renewed after the image of its creator.” We are stripped and we are clothed, stripped of the old garment which has been soiled by the multitude of our sins, clothed with the new that is free from all stain. What does this mean? We are clothed in Christ himself. St Paul remarks: “As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”⁷⁸ John Chrysostom describes mystagogy in relation to the sacraments of initiation even more specifically than his contemporaries. In the process of initiation, he understands mystagogy to be precisely that which occurs in the sacramental celebration. Maxwell E Johnson noted: “In Chrysostom’s use, the expression ‘mystagogy’ usually means the rite of initiation, as it existed in his time. It is taken as a whole for the neophytes to accept baptism, to renounce the devil and to unite with the Christians in the Eucharist.”⁷⁹ John Chrysostom laid more emphasis on the sacraments as even more important than the homily. The meanings of the

⁷⁸ Ibid., 129.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

sacraments are beyond the celebrated ritual. Giving of instructions during the catechesis on the occasion of initiation only serves to improve the role of the sacraments as ritual vehicles in the process of mystagogy. It is based on this view of mystagogy that some contemporary theologians consider it as a matter of difference in the usage of language of the catechumenate for the Christian formation of those baptized in infancy.⁸⁰ The homilies of Chrysostom were made to arouse the moral sense of the whole of the Christian life and not simply to introduce liturgical teaching of the mysteries of the Christians. The homilies were not just for the neophytes but addressed to the entire Christian community.

3.4 THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA (d. 428)

A fellow student of Chrysostom, Theodore was ordained at Antioch about 383 and became the bishop of Mopsuestia, in Cilicia. Theodore, through his preaching on the liturgy, grounded his idea of Christian orthodoxy. For him, the liturgical signs bring about the present reality of the past salvific events of Christ's death and resurrection, and the future hope hidden in those symbols is guaranteed by the resurrection of Christ; he saw the baptismal birth and resurrection as symbols of the real beginning of the future realization of what is now contained in promise.⁸¹ In trying to explain the ritual of the sacraments, Theodore in his opening sentence of his homily on the Eucharist (considered mystagogic) said that the deacons' stole (*orarion*), worn on the left shoulder and hanging down both in front and behind, makes one think of Christ being led to his passion. Further on in the same homily he said that the deacons are vested in clothes adapted to the splendor of their ministry; and he again commented on the same rubric which says that the diaconal stole "rests on the left shoulder and hangs down at both sides" in front and behind. For Theodore this is

⁸⁰ Antonius, 305.

⁸¹ Regan, 19.

a sign that the deacons do not exercise a servile ministry but a free one; the realities to which they minister lead those who belong to the household of God—the Church—to freedom.⁸² Theodore introduced this allegorical practice of comparing ritual elements of the Eucharistic celebration with events of Christ’s passion, interpreting the Eucharist as a ritual allegory that re-enacts the events of Jesus’ passion, death, burial and resurrection. The purpose of the catechetical homilies of Theodore on the mysteries was to explain the rites of Baptism and the Eucharist on the strict theological basis which cannot be explained by the Creed. Enrico Mazza says that the homilies on the Creed give us Christian doctrine, while those on the mysteries give us mystagogy, understood as the spiritual and inspiring aspect of doctrine.⁸³ In his homily on the Lord’s Prayer, Theodore’s view on the Our Father as containing a moral meaning emerges. For further explanation, he made reference to the great commissioning found in Matthew 28:19: ‘After saying ‘Go, teach all nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,’ Jesus taught them to “observe all that I command you.” With this reference, Theodore shows that to accept religious and orthodox doctrine, we must be careful to make our lives accord with the divine commandments. For this reason, they joined to the words of the Creed a prayer which contains an adequate teaching on morals...⁸⁴ He believed that every prayer is a teaching about life for all those who will be dutifully conscious of their devotion. Prayer for Theodore is moral uprightness, love of God and the zeal for what pleases God.⁸⁵ Theodore also preached on the Mysteries to convey an understanding of the mysteries being celebrated. The purpose of the Eucharistic food as preached by Theodore is that Christians may understand what it means and grasp accurately its

82 Ibid.

83 Mazza, 49.

84 Ibid., 50.

85 Ibid.

greatness. He also believed that the understanding of the mysteries celebrated led to the understanding for the sacrament. Theodore applied typological method both to the biblical interpretation especially in relation to the Old and New Testaments and to the interpretation of the liturgical rites. Taking Theodore's liturgical typology into cognizance we first note that the interpretation of some of the liturgical rites is based on allegory. For example, in his method of interpretation of baptismal actions Theodore interpreted the kneeling and immersion during baptismal rites as follows:

The baptizands kneel. This action is interpreted as a sign of the situation in which the baptizands presently find themselves, namely, enslavement to the devil. Kneeling for prayer is part of the exorcisms; therefore, the action must be express the theology of the rite of exorcisms, which sees this rite as a condemnation of demons and deliverance of the baptizand from servitude in which human beings lived before being delivered from demon.⁸⁶

Also, for the baptismal immersion, the baptizands bow their heads. The pontiff places a hand on the head of each and guides it under water, in this position, the baptizands cannot help keeping their heads bowed. At the third invocation, when no further immersion is to follow, they raise their heads. The bowing and raising is a functional action, but for Theodore the action is symbolical because the bowing of the head three times represents an implicit 'Amen' to the Trinitarian invocation.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Ibid., 58

⁸⁷ Ibid., 59.

3.6 CONCLUSION

Mystagogy seeks to offer proper explanation of both the sacramental realism and the rite of the liturgical celebration. Through the homilies of the fourth century; mystagogues explained to the newly baptized the meaning and nature of the liturgical actions in which they had participated. The Church Fathers realized the effectiveness of mystagogy to translate experience.

CHAPTER FOUR

MYSTAGOGICAL INSTRUCTIONS IN THE DIOCESE OF ZARIA AND THE APPLICATION OF CYRIL AND OTHER MYSTAGOGUES' APPROACHES.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we will examine mystagogy within the Catholic Diocese of Zaria by examining the brief history of the Diocese of Zaria, the agents of mystagogy, the role of the Christian communities in the process of mystagogy, the life of neophytes and the call to evangelization.

4.2 A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ZARIA, NIGERIA

The Catholic Diocese of Zaria was erected by His Holiness Pope John Paul II on December 5, 2000. The rescript was promulgated on December 29, 2000 with Msgr. George J. Dodo declared the first Bishop of the Territory and its erection as a Diocese on March 3, 2001. Prior to the establishment of the Church in Zaria as a diocese, the first Christian missionaries in Northern Nigeria belonged to the Anglican Church sent by the Church Missionary Society (CMA). There was the establishment of a mission station at Lokoja in 1866 with Bishop Samuel Adjai Crowder as the Superior.⁸⁸ The first Catholic Missionaries called the Society of African Missions (SMA) were welcomed by the Anglican missionaries in 1956. In 1903, the missionaries had already established Shendam and were working on more stations among the people of the lower plateau. In 1911 the development of the railway made ready for the establishment of the new prefecture that covers the North of Benue and the East of Zaria. Notably, the construction of the railway line

⁸⁸ Department of Social Communications, Diocese of Zaria (Wusasa, 2001), "A Brief History of the Catholic Diocese of Zaria" (<http://www.cathdiza.org.ng>), 1-4, accessed September 21, 2019.

from Lagos to Kano and from Port-Harcourt to Kafanchan opened communication with the rural areas and the new towns emerged at the central areas along the rail and became the focal point of growth.⁸⁹ The establishment of towns was done as camps for the railway workers and their families and attracted both artisans and traders from the Southern part of Nigeria who found markets and a demand for their skill. Many of the persons were Catholic. There was also the establishment of small churches and many who attended were Igbo-Catholic-oriented workers, who settled in the towns on the rail line which lies in the establishment of the mission stations.⁹⁰ Through the influence of some groups of Christians with western education and western oriented lifestyle, civil servants from Sierra Leone and Ghana provided for the administration of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria and education was made the basis of the evangelization of the Igbo people by then prefect Apostolic of the Lower Niger, Msgr. Joseph Shanahan. The missionaries adopted it because it became a very fruitful means of evangelization. In 1928, with the visit of Msgr. Kingsely, the Apostolic delegate to British and West Africa began giving the building of schools precedence over constructing churches.⁹¹ In 1929, Kaduna became the missionary area, the building headquarters of the then Kaduna region and the ideal administrative center for the Catholic Church in the North. By 1934 there was also the recognition of Kaduna as the new Prefecture of Kaduna with Sokoto, Kastina, Kano, Minna and Zaria. Some Catholic Communities in the Kaduna prefecture consisted of migrant workers from the south of Nigeria who gathered in the Sabon Gari area in separate quarters since they were not allowed to live with the Muslims in the major towns.⁹² The missionary priests of the Society of Africa were in

89 Ibid.

90 Ibid.

91 Ibid.

92 Ibid.

residence in Lokoja across the River Niger to River Benue and used to travel by rail to Minna, Kaduna and Zaria until a residence was built for them and in 1925 Father Pat O'Connell was the first missionary to live in Zaria. Father John McCarthy succeeded Father O'Connell, who later became Archbishop of Kaduna, and brought development in the whole of his juridical area. Father Malachy Gately succeeded Father John McCarthy as the third priest who lived in Zaria. The few Catholics who resided in Zaria then were mainly railway workers from Sierra Leone, Ghana, Cameroon and Southern Nigeria.

The conversion of indigenous Hausa people was impossible because of the hostility of the Muslim ruler and the agreement between the British colonial powers and the Muslim emirs to the effect that missionaries must not evangelize in Muslim areas. The missionaries changed their attention to the pagan territories of the southern part of Kaduna State because of the unfriendly and uncompromising behavior of the Muslim leaders. The growth of Christianity among the pagan areas became pronounced in that period.⁹³ There was the establishment of more schools, especially primary and post-primary by the government in northern Nigeria between 1939 and 1960 and missionaries were given permission to open schools in Zaria and some part of northern Nigeria. By 1965 the missionaries established educational institutions: a Teacher Training College and St Joseph's Minor Seminary were opened in Zaria and the government opened the Ahmadu Bello University and the post-primary institutions that brought converts from different parts of the country to Zaria.⁹⁴ It is important to note that the activities of the laity contributed to the Catholic

93 Ibid.

94 Ibid.

Church in Zaria. During the visit of the Pope John Paul II to Nigeria in 1982, the pope encouraged the Catholic faithful to respond to the challenges of the Second Vatican Council (1963-1965), in which the laity was invited to play an active role in the program of evangelization. Following the call of the Holy Father, legionaries and some Catechists engaged visitations to communities and families for the purpose of evangelization. In 1984, the same laity began to meet as pastoral councils in response of the Holy Father but it was punctuated by the religious and political riots in 1987 which resulted in the destruction of many Catholic Churches. In 1991 the Church in Zaria hosted the National Council Conference as a revitalization program held at St Endas' Parish in Basawa. The laity also hosted the Zumunta Mata Archdiocesan Conference of the Catholic Youth Organization. The Church in Zaria also hosted the then papal pro-nuncio to Nigeria, Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano in June 1998. The laity of the Zaria deanery engaged in evangelization to the indigenous Hausa people who are identified as the Masihiyawa people (those who believe in Christ) who are distinct from the other Hausas (non- Christians). The Catholic Diocese of Zaria covers about 18,000 sq km with a population of 2,286,38 and a population of Catholics of 71,336.95

With its creation as a diocese, the Church in Zaria, posted a new challenge to the bishop, priests and laity of the territory to work for the growth of the Gospel even amidst the hostile situation of the environment. Within the Diocese, occasionally, there are tensions arising from religious-political crises; even in recent times the activities of the Boko Haram, Fulani herdsmen and kidnappers really pose a challenge within the Diocese of Zaria. The successful development

95 Ibid.

of the Diocese will largely depend on the power of the Holy Spirit, the intercession of Mary the mother of God and collaboration of the laity in working with the bishop and the priests.

4.3 DESCRIPTION OF MYSTAGOGY IN THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ZARIA

The church in the Catholic Diocese of Zaria implemented the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults of 1972 with coordination by the pastors and parochial vicars and also by catechists and catechetical instructors. Within the Diocese of Zaria, mystagogy is seen not only as the last step of the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults but it is whole process. Mystagogy is not just a period of time during the initiation rituals, but it is a way of doing theology that leads to understanding the mystery of God. David Regan states: “Mystagogy is always aimed at initiating men and women into an experience of the divine.”⁹⁶ Experience is said to be very important in the whole process of initiation and mystagogy starts with reflecting on experience. The mystagogues will also invite those who are present to reflect on specific events during the whole process of initiation. The period of precatechumenate as described by the RCIA is set aside for evangelization, so that the genuine will to follow Christ and seek baptism may mature (RCIA, no. 37). This initial stage of evangelization is said to be mystagogical when it takes seriously the real-life experiences of the candidates. The catechists or catechetical instructors assist the candidates to look back at their own experiences and recognize God at work. This period of evangelization that is mystagogical begins with personal experience, which is related to the Gospel and the Church’s tradition. The catechumenate period is said to be mystagogical because during this period the candidates begin with the experience of the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens, which employs

⁹⁶ Regan, 39.

powerful symbols. Among the rites belonging to the period of catechumenate is the celebration of the Word of God (RCIA, no. 79). Through the mystagogical preaching the candidates will be assisted to make connections between realities of their lives and the realities of the Gospel. The period of Purification and Enlightenment is also mystagogical in nature because there is also the opportunity for the elect and their godparents to reflect on the experience of God encountered in the rituals of the church. The final stage, which is called postbaptismal catechesis or the mystagogical period proper is usually the Easter season following the celebration of initiation during which the neophytes experience being fully part of the Christian community by means of pertinent catechesis and participation with all the faithful in the Sunday Eucharistic celebration.⁹⁷ The catechesis is fully mystagogical focusing on the experience of the new grace of the sacramental acts.

4.4 MYSTAGOGUES IN THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ZARIA

The whole process of Christian Initiation involves the help of baptized Catholics who will assist those who seek admission into the Church through the initiation process. According to Dennis Chriszt; “An effective initiation process is a gathering of people...it is more of a conglomeration of persons than a single entity.”⁹⁸ The mystagogues are involved in catechesis by presenting Catholic teachings, directing the hearts of those to be initiated towards God, and fostering participation in the liturgical life of the Church. In the Catholic Diocese of Zaria, the

⁹⁷ RCIA, 16

⁹⁸ Dennis, Chriszt, *Creating an Effective Mystagogy: A Handbook for Catechetical Leaders*. San Jose, CA: (Resource Publications, 2001), 128.

following persons participate in the whole process of mystagogy; the bishop, priests, deacon, catechists/masuawa'azi, catechetical instructors, sponsors and godparents.

Bishop: The bishop is the chief shepherd of the local Church who oversees the whole process of Christian initiation. The RCIA provides the specific duties of bishops in the process of initiation:

The bishop, in person or through his delegate, sets up, regulates and promotes the program of pastoral formation for catechumens and admits the candidates to their election and to the sacraments. It is hoped that, presiding if possible at the Lenten liturgy, he will himself celebrate the rite of election and, at the Easter Vigil, the sacraments of initiation, at least for the initiation of those who are fourteen years old or older...⁹⁹

Vatican II's Decree on the Pastoral office of Bishops, *Christus Dominus*, no. 15 states that bishops are the chief shepherds of the local Churches and are the principal dispensers of the mysteries of God as well as the governors, promoters, and guardians of the entire liturgical life in the Church committed to them.¹⁰⁰ This is why they direct the conferring of baptism, which brings to the recipient a share in the kingly priesthood of Christ. Therefore, bishops should personally celebrate baptism, especially at the Easter Vigil. They should have a particular concern for the preparation and baptism of adults.¹⁰¹ The role of the local ordinary of the Church in the whole process of Christian Initiation helps the catechumens to be led into the mysteries of Christ. The bishop has the responsibility of fixing the duration and directing the program of the catechumens and providing guidelines suitable for the program (RCIA, no.77).

⁹⁹ RCIA, General Introduction, no. 12.

¹⁰⁰ Vatican II, The Pastoral Office of Bishops, *Christus Dominus*, Vatican Translation, (Strathfield: St Paul Publications, 2009), 239.

¹⁰¹ RCIA, General Introduction, 12.

Priests: As parish priests, their function in the process of initiation is to oversee that everything regarding the initiation process is carried out properly in the parish. The priest should provide pastoral care throughout the process of initiation to the catechumens and the initiation teams by giving them his support and encouragement. The RCIA states:

The priests, in addition to their usual ministry for the celebration of baptism, confirmation and Eucharist, have the responsibility of attending to the pastoral and personal care of the catechumens especially those who seem hesitant or discouraged. With the help of deacons and catechists, they are to provide instruction for the catechumens; they are also to approve the choice of godparents and willingly listen to and help them; they are to be diligent in the correct celebration and adaption of the rites through the whole course of Christian initiation 102

Deacon: The General Instruction to Christian Initiation offers the specific role of deacons in the process of initiation: ... deacons as co-workers in the ministry of the bishop also prepare candidates for baptism and by the invitation or consent of the bishop or pastor celebrate the sacraments. The deacon also assists at the celebration of the sacraments especially when there are large numbers to be baptized (RCIA, General Introduction, nos. 14, 15). The deacon should always be ready to assist the bishop or deacon in the ministry of catechumens (RCIA, no. 15).

Catechists: The catechists who assist in the parish's catechetical process know the traditions and teaching of the Catholic Church and need to be familiar with the liturgical calendar. The RCIA states: "Catechists should see that their instruction is filled with the spirit of the Gospel, adapted to the liturgical signs and the cycle of the Church's year, suited to the needs of the catechumens and as far as possible enriched by local tradition."¹⁰³ The Catechists as acting in the name of the church must impart the belief of the Church not their personal opinions. It is the responsibility of the bishops to see that catechists are trained and prepared for their ministry.

102 Ibid., 13.

103 Ibid., 16.

Vatican II's Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops, *Christus Dominus*, no. 14 made it clear by stating: "They (bishops) should, furthermore, ensure that catechists are adequately prepared for their task, being well instructed in the doctrine of the church and possessing both a practical and theoretical knowledge of the laws of psychology and of education method."¹⁰⁴ At the discretion of the bishop, catechists may preside at the minor exorcisms and the blessings found in the ritual (see RCIA, General Introduction, no. 16).

Sponsors: The sponsors play an important role in the life of those seeking initiation in the Church. They offer testimony of the life of the catechumens. Dennis Chriszt stated: "The role of sponsor is one of guide and initiator into the life as a citizen of the city of God. Not only does the sponsor witness to the church about the life of the candidate, but the sponsor witnesses to the candidate about the life of the church."¹⁰⁵ The RCIA describes the sponsors as persons who have known and assisted the candidates and stand as witnesses to the candidates' morals, faith and intention (RCIA, 10). The sponsors should be Catholics who will also keep regular contact with the catechumens and help them to growth in faith.

Godparents: The godparent is the person who is expected to live by the standard of the Catholic faith and should be able to communicate to the catechumens the value of the faith they are preparing to receive. The functions of the godparent are indicated by the RCIA:

Godparents are persons chosen by the candidates on the basis of example, good qualities and friendship, delegated by the local Christian community, and approved by the priest. It is the responsibility of the godparents to show the candidates how to practice the Gospel in personal and social life, to sustain the candidates in

¹⁰⁴ Vatican II, The Pastoral Office of Bishops, *Christus Dominus*, Vatican Translation, (Strathfield: St Paul Publications, 2009), 329.

¹⁰⁵ Dennis Chriszt, *Creating an Effective Mystagogy: A Handbook for Catechetical Leaders* (San Jose, CA: Resource Publications, 2001), 129.

moment of hesitancy and anxiety, to bear witness, and to guide the candidates' progress in the baptismal life.¹⁰⁶

At the Rite of Election, the godparents assume their role and continue through the reception of the sacraments and even fulfill their role for life. It may be either one or two godparents if; there are two godparents, one must be a male and the other female. (See RCIA, no.11).

Catechetical Instructors: Addressing his audience Cyril of Jerusalem says, "The duty of catechizing was not limited to a class of persons permanently set apart from that purpose, but all orders of the clergy were accustomed to take part in the work. Even laymen were encouraged to teach children or new converts the first elements of religion."¹⁰⁷ This address was not given to catechumens but to the faithful who were present listening to him. Catechetical instructors are members of the parish staff or those trained or volunteers to teach catechism in the parish. The instructors should also receive at least some level of training so as to be able to teach catechism and they should be supervised by the priests of the parish. According to our local understanding here in Nigeria, all catechists are trained catechetical instructors whose function is to lead people to understand the faith by teaching while catechetical instructors are volunteers in the parishes who assist in teaching catechism when there are insufficient numbers of trained catechists. The catechetical instructors may not have gone into catechetical trainings.

4.5 THE ROLE OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN THE PROCESS OF MYSTAGOGY

The Second Vatican Council in the Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church, *Ad Gentes*, no. 14, affirms also the need for the participation of the entire community in the process

¹⁰⁶ RCIA, no. 11.

¹⁰⁷ Paul A. Boer, *The Catechetical Lectures of St. Cyril of Jerusalem* (London: Veritatis Splendor Publications, 2014),41.

of Christian initiation by stating; “This Christian initiation in the catechumenate should be taken care of not only by catechist and priests, but by the entire community of the faithful, so that right from the outset the catechumens may feel that they belong to the people of God.”¹⁰⁸ In fact, the RCIA indicates that the initiation of catechumens is a gradual process that takes place within the community of the faithful by joining the catechumens in reflecting on the value of the paschal mystery and by renewing their own conversion; the faithful provide an example that will help the catechumens to obey the Holy Spirit more generously (RCIA, no. 4). The RCIA described in various paragraphs that the process of Christian initiation takes place within the local Christian community. By implication, initiation is not done in isolation because one is always initiated into a group of people, whether a large or small community. Most of the rituals indicated in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults are done within the context of a liturgical community, a community whose gathering is done for the purpose of offering prayer and praise to God. The Rites encourage the community of faithful to participate in the whole process of initiation. The General Introduction of the RCIA encourages the community actively to participate in the process of initiation by stating: “In the actual celebration, the people of God (represented not only by the parents, godparents, and relatives, but also, as far as possible, by friends, neighbors, and some members of the local Church) should take active part. Thus, they will show their common faith and the shared joy with which they newly baptized are received into the community of the Church.”¹⁰⁹ The central role of the local community is well described in the RCIA of Christian Initiation of Adults:

¹⁰⁸ Vatican II, Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church, *Ad Gentes*, Vatican Translation, (Strathfield: St Paul Publications, 2009), 351.

¹⁰⁹ Christian Initiation, General Introduction, No. 7.

The people of God, as represented by the local Church, should understand and show by their concern that the initiation of adults is the responsibility of all the baptized. Therefore, the community must always be fully prepared in pursuit of its apostolic vocation to give help to those who are searching for Christ. In the various circumstances of daily life, even as in the apostolate, all the followers of Christ have the obligation of spreading the faith according to their abilities. Hence, the entire community must help the candidates and catechumens throughout the process of initiation.¹¹⁰

The Rite calls for the Christian community's participation during the postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy by stating: "During the period immediately after baptism, the faithful should take part in the Masses for the neophytes, that is the Sunday Masses of the Easter season, welcome the neophytes with open arms in charity and help them to feel more at home in the community of the baptized."¹¹¹ In the mystagogical instruction of the Patristic preachers of the fourth century, it is evident that the Christian community was present with the neophytes which indicates that the presence of the Christian community stands as a witness to the continuous conversion and offers encouragement to the catechumens and the neophytes in the community.

4.6 APPLICATION OF THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES OF CYRIL AND OTHER MYSTAGOGUES IN THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ZARIA.

4.6.1 Mystagogical Methods Used During the Fourth Century

There is no one method used during the fourth century to explain the theological and spiritual meanings of the liturgical rite being celebrated. In their various mystagogical preaching or catecheses, some methods are common to the fathers during this period.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, no.9.

¹¹¹ RCIA, nos. 9 and 5. See also RCIA, nos 25, 247 and 248.

4.6.2 Typological method

The Church Fathers used the relationship between the Old and the New Testaments in a symbolic way by drawing from the text used in the liturgical celebration to explain to the neophytes the mystery in which they have been initiated. By addressing his listeners, Ambrose, commenting on the first immersion, said: “Baptism is a type of death in part because the font is a type of tomb, the baptismal font looks somewhat like a tomb. The font is a grave because when the neophytes were in the font, they were buried with water, which is of the earth and therefore satisfies the sentence....”¹¹² Since the candidates’ baptism is a type of the tomb, it follows then that baptism is a type of death.

4.6.3 Allegorical method

This method involves the rereading of an Old Testament event so as to state the meaning of the text used to illustrate a Christian principle. Ambrose of Milan’s mystagogical work is particularly focused on using allegory to enable his hearers to see beyond an object’s physical characteristics in order to discover its symbolic meaning. In his *De Sacramentis* Ambrose called “his listeners to see that the pillar of light leading Israel was, in fact, truth, since it sheds a full and open brightness and Christ who scattered the shadows of unbelief and pours the light of truth and spiritual grace on human hearts. Similarly, this pillar of cloud is the Holy Spirit.”¹¹³ The use of allegory then helps the Fathers to discover the unique relationship between the Old and the New Testaments and in connection with the sacraments that are being celebrated. The allegorical

¹¹² Craig Alan Satterlee, *Ambrose of Milan’s Method of Mystagogical Preaching* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, Pueblo Books, 2002), 201.

¹¹³Satterlee, 232.

interpretation of the fourth century presupposes that the newly baptized received the gift of faith from God to see beyond the physical to the spiritual.

4.6.4 The use of image or icon

The Church Fathers applied the use of image to help explain to the neophytes the liturgical rites. David Regan observes: “The theme of the image of God used by Cyril of Jerusalem in his mystagogic sermon; the theme becomes mystagogic when it is used of the white robe of the newly baptized to express their resemblance to the glorified Christ. Indeed, the white robe is sometimes used also (notably in Ambrose and Chrysostom) as a bridal symbol of the new members of the Church, Bride of Christ.”¹¹⁴ Cyril employs the scriptural imagery to paint word pictures of the life of faith into which he seeks to draw his listeners, as is clearly visible in the Procatechesis: “Already, there is an odour of blessedness upon you, who are about to be enlightened; already you are gathering the spiritual flowers, to weave heavenly crowns; already the fragrance of the Holy Spirit has breathed upon you; already you have gathered round the vestibule of the King’s palace; may you be led by the king....”¹¹⁵ With the aid of this imagery, Cyril tries to draw his hearers into deeper contact with reality behind the imagery, i.e. the mysteries. Notably, both John Chrysostom and Ambrose of Milan used the image of a white robe as a bridal garment which is the symbol of the new members of the Church (the bride of Christ).

4.6.5 Mystagogical Preaching

The Church fathers of the fourth century really explore the means of mystagogical preaching as one of the methods of doing mystagogy. In his *Ambrose of Milan’s Method of*

¹¹⁴ Regan, 61.

¹¹⁵ Paul A. Boer, *The Catechetical Lectures of St. Cyril of Jerusalem*: (Dublin: Veritatis Splendor Publication 2014),157.

Mystagogical Preaching, Craig Alan Satterlee identifies the four methods of mystagogical preaching of Ambrose of Milan. They are: (i) establish the text, (ii) evaluate the text, (iii) interpret the meaning of the rites, and (iv) spell out the implications of participation for daily life.¹¹⁶ In other words: lead his listeners into understanding the mysteries they have received. Ambrose (i) enjoins the neophytes to remember what they have experienced (i.e., the specific concrete things...), (ii) emphasizes the neophytes' active involvement in the mysteries, (iii) appeals to the neophytes' sense and emotion as well as to their minds, (iv) tells the newly baptized how to respond and (5) spells out the implications of initiation for life in the world.¹¹⁷

4.6.6 The use of the Scriptures

During the fourth century, Scripture was seen as the ultimate and powerful source of knowledge of reality. That is to say, the Scripture is inevitable for understanding the meaning of the mysteries that are celebrated. As Craig Alan Satterlee noted, "Mystagogy is inseparable from scripture, while the sacraments provide the text on which mystagogy is based and Scripture is the means by which this text is both interpreted and illustrated."¹¹⁸ Ambrose of Milan applies the use of the scriptures for both the meaning of the sacrament and the images to interpret and explain to his hearers the meaning of the Christian initiation with the help of scriptural images. He encouraged the mystagogues to make the effort to read Scripture and think biblically because mystagogy calls for seeing the whole scripture and the way biblical themes, images and stories connect, intersect and reflect on another.¹¹⁹ Cyril on the other hand believed that since the Scripture contains everything that needs to be known about the mysteries of the faith, nothing

¹¹⁶ Satterlee, 317.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 331.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

should be said about the doctrine of the Creed without the scripture, and also that Scripture is spoken by the Holy Spirit who makes it intelligible to those who hear and since the Scripture is the vehicle of the Holy Spirit, Cyril believes it has the power when proclaimed to draw listeners to salvation.¹²⁰

4.7 THE LIFE OF NEOPHYTES: A CALL TO EVANGELIZATION IN THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ZARIA

The neophytes who have been initiated into the Church also participate in the mission of the Church. How can they contribute to the spread of the Gospel within the Catholic Diocese of Zaria? In his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* Pope Paul VI stated:

The task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church... evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ's sacrifice in the Mass, which is the memorial of His death and glorious resurrection.¹²¹

The General Directory for Catechesis listed the elements essential for evangelization as follows: "The missionary command of Jesus to evangelize has various aspects of which they are closely connected: 'proclaim' (Mk 16:15), 'make disciples and teach,' 'be my witness,' 'baptize,' 'do this in memory of me' (Lk 22:19), 'love one another' (Jn 15:12). Proclamation, witness, teaching, sacraments, and love of neighbor are the various aspects or means by which the one Gospel is transmitted."¹²² The neophytes are called to participate in this mission of spreading the

120 Pamela Jackson, "Cyril of Jerusalem's use of the Scripture in Catechesis," *Theological Studies* 52 (1991), 431.

121 Pope Paul VI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on Evangelization in the Modern World, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Frederick, MD: World Among Us Press, 2014), no. 14.

122 Congregation for the Clergy, General Directory for Catechesis (Dublin, Veritas, 1998), no. 46.

Gospel in their own unique way. The RCIA describes the period of the pre-catechumenate as the time of evangelization where faithfully and constantly the living God is proclaimed with Jesus Christ whom he has sent for the salvation of all. Thus, those who are not yet Christians, their hearts opened by the Holy Spirit, may believe, and be freely converted to the Lord and commit themselves sincerely to him... (RCIA, no.36). During this period of evangelization, the Church clearly exercises her vocation to be an evangelizer. Pope Paul VI states:

It is above all His mission and His condition of being an evangelizer that she is called upon to continue. For the Christian community is never closed in upon itself. The intimate life of this community—the life of listening to the word and the apostles’ teaching, charity lived in a fraternal way, the sharing of bread—this intimate life only acquires its full meaning when it becomes a witness, when it evokes admiration and conversion, and when it becomes the preaching and proclamation of the Good News.¹²³

Since the erection of the Catholic Diocese of Zaria in 2001, the Church has continued to participate actively and consciously in the work of evangelization in various ways. One of the most important means in which the Diocese of Zaria participates in the spreading of the Gospel is through the catechetical instruction she provides to the catechumens who seek to be initiated into the community of faith, the Church. During this whole period of initiation, the Church tries to provide suitable explanation of God’s word to the candidates that will help them to purify their intention to cooperate with the grace of God and eventually enter into a relationship with God in Christ in the Church. Since the Church exists for the purpose of mission, the neophytes are encouraged to learn continuously how actively to work with other Christians to help spread the Gospel and build up the Church by the life of witness of their lives and by profession of faith.

¹²³ *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 15.

With the dynamic and unique nature of the Catholic Diocese of Zaria, the neophytes are called also to participate in continuous evangelization in their unique way. In his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel) Pope Francis stated: “In all the baptized from first to last, the sanctifying grace power of the Spirit is at work, impelling us to evangelization. By the virtue of their baptism, all the members of the people of God have become missionary disciples (cf. Mt 28:19). All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization....” They are also called to proclaim the Gospel through their experiences as Pope Francis rightly explains it:

Each of us should find way to communicate Jesus wherever we are. All of us are called to offer others an explicit witness to the saving love of the Lord, who despite our imperfections offers us his closeness, his word and strength, and gives meaning to our lives. In your heart you know that it is not the same to live without him; what you have come to realize, what has helped you to live and give you hope, is what you also need to communicate to others.¹²⁴

Pope John Paul II’s *Redemptoris Missio* (the Mission of the Redeemer) gave a teaching about the new evangelization. The Holy Father, through this encyclical, renewed the call to all the Christian faithful to evangelization in the spirit of *Ad gentes* of the Second Vatican Council and *Evangelii nuntiandi* of Pope Paul VI: “No believer in Christ, no institution of the Christ can avoid this supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all people.”¹²⁵ Pope John Paul II offered three circumstances in evangelization: (i) preaching to those who have never heard the Gospel, (ii) preaching to those Christian communities where the Church is present and who have fervor in their faith, and (iii) preaching to those Christian communities who have ancient roots but who have lost a living sense of the faith, or even no longer consider themselves members of the Church,

¹²⁴ Pope Francis, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today’s World, *Evangelii Gaudium* (Libreria Edictrice Vaticana, 2013), nos. 119, 120 and 121.

¹²⁵ Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter on the Permanent Validity of the Church’s Missionary Mandate, *Redemptoris Missio*, (Libreria Edictrice Vaticana, 2013), no. 3.

and live a life far removed from Christ and his Gospel. In this case what is needed is a ‘new evangelization’ or a ‘re-evangelization’.¹²⁶ As the newly baptized in the Catholic Diocese of Zaria, the neophytes are called to be personally involved in the work of evangelization through witnessing and works of charity and profession of faith wherever they find themselves because they do not need any formal training to be able to participate in the work of evangelization. The newly baptized also are encouraged actively to engage here and now in evangelization because through the whole process of Christian initiation they experienced God’s saving love. One thinks of the Samaritan woman who became a missionary immediately after she encountered Christ by going to inform other Samaritans and how they came to believe in Jesus because of her testimony (John 4:39). One is also reminded of Paul, who after the encounter he had with Jesus on his way to Damascus, “immediately proclaimed Christ” (Acts 9:20; 22:6-21). By implication, the neophytes are evangelizers by the very fact of the one unique encounter with God’s love in Christ during the course of the initiation process.

4.8 CONCLUSION

All through this chapter, the thesis analyses the present mystagogy in the Diocese of Zaria and applies Cyril’s mystagogy and the methods used during the fourth century within the context of the Diocese of Zaria. St Cyril’s mystagogical catecheses stand out as the key sources of explaining mystagogy to the newly baptized that were initiated during the Paschal season and his mystagogical homilies were delivered in the context of the liturgy of Christian initiation. St Cyril’s approaches and those others of mystagogues can really go a long way to aid the Catholic faithful

¹²⁶ Ibid., no. 33.

in the Catholic Diocese of Zaria. In addition, it will be an important tool in the hands of the catechetical instructors in the Diocese of Zaria.

CHAPTER FIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Through this thesis, I became more aware of the need to engage in mystagogy in the parishes in the Catholic Diocese of Zaria during the stages of initiation and after the reception of the sacraments. There is need for a paradigm shift from just initiating the candidates to becoming part of the Christ's faithful to continually engaging them to be more aware of new approaches to grow more in faith and to be able witnesses to the Gospel values in the hostile environment. The fourth period of RCIA is the time to invite the entire assembly to share the Word of God and we celebrate to discover and ponder the mysteries of Christ. It is a time for the entire community to grow close to Christ by talking about God's giving life. This period invites us to meditate on the mysteries that are celebrated so as to be more faithful in our living of the Gospel, deepen our faith and strengthen our relationship with Christ and His body, the Church.

I therefore recommend the following:

- 1) There should be a program set up in the parishes within the Diocese of Zaria for ongoing mystagogy because our relationship to the sacraments changes as we grow and mature as individuals and meet new life challenges and circumstances. Inviting the parish family to study and reflect on the ritual components of the Eucharistic liturgy would be most helpful.
- 2) Priests and deacons should be encouraged to prepare solid mystagogical homilies that explain the rituals we celebrate during the Paschal Triduum.
- 3) The catechetical instructors should at least have seminars or workshops before and after the reception of the sacraments by the candidates.
- 4) As Catholics are rediscovering the importance of the proclamation of the word God through evangelization, mystagogy has incredible importance in the parishes for the new ways of

catechesis in the new evangelization. Mystagogy is very vital in the achievement of evangelization.

5) Since mystagogy is lifelong and for all believers, it means that it is a lifelong commitment to learning and deepening, knowing and understanding. The believers are not spectators but participants in mystery of the Church. The Christian community is to renew her own conversion as the catechumens begin their journey of faith among other believers. The period of mystagogy will serve as a reminder that all of us are called to this form of reflection.¹²⁷ Therefore, I recommend during Lent and Eastertime there should be faith-based events that help believers have a form of mystagogical reflection (a liturgical experience followed by questions and catechesis).

6) The most critical element of the successful mystagogy is well-celebrated rites. Excellent, careful, well-planned, and well-executed liturgy is first-level mystagogy. Liturgy is first theology, that is, liturgy is the most immediate, most condensed statement of who we are and what we believe. Good liturgy is an absolute prerequisite to rich symbolic participation and contemplation. Good liturgy nourishes the faith; poor liturgical destroys it.¹²⁸ I strongly recommend that the liturgy should be celebrated according to stipulated regulations of the Church to lead people into the deeper meaning of the mysteries of Christ love.

7) In his mystagogical catecheses, Cyril is known for his use of the four terms expressing his typology to explain the meaning of mysteries of Christ love: symbol, imitation, likeness and *antitypos*. It will be of great help if such methods of explanation are used for those preparing for the sacraments of initiation in the Diocese of Zaria.

¹²⁷ Kathleen A. Hughes, *Mystagogy of Sacrament: Saying Amen* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1999), 14.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 16.

5.2 GENERAL CONCLUSION

By examining the theology of mystagogy I discovered that mystagogy was the way the Fathers of the Church embraced and trained new Christian in the practices of faith. Mystagogy is carried out during the Easter period to help the Christian community deepen its understanding and commitment to Christ and Christian living (RCIA, no. 224). During this period, the newly baptized explore their experience of being fully initiated through active participation with the community of the baptized at Sunday's Eucharistic celebrations and through appropriate catechesis. In reality, mystagogy is a life-long process by which all in the Christian community should engage for the purpose of a continuous grasp of the meaning of the mystery that is being celebrated. In his Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*, Pope Benedict XVI acknowledged the significance of on-going mystagogy by stating: "The mature fruit of mystagogy is awareness that one's life is being progressively transformed by the holy mysteries being celebrated."¹²⁹

In the Catholic Diocese of Zaria, it is appropriate to carry on with ongoing mystagogy for all the baptized even after the fourth period of the RCIA for the continuous openness to the meaning of the mysteries through constantly participating in the Eucharistic celebrations. As Pope Benedict noted: "...the effectiveness of Eucharistic catechesis is surely an increased sense of the mystery of God present among us. This can be expressed in concrete outward signs of reverence for the Eucharist which the process of mystagogy should inculcate in the faithful."¹³⁰ Through mystagogical preaching priests should explain the meaning of the rites during the liturgical celebrations so as to enable the neophytes to have a better grasp of the mysteries into which they

¹²⁹ Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, no. 64.

¹³⁰ Ibid, no. 65.

have been initiated, through studying God's Word by doing *Lectio Divina*, and through Catholic education. Christian education will help to train Christians in adult faith that makes them new members of the body of Christ capable of bearing witness in their surroundings. Ongoing mystagogy is very significant for the whole of the community because their relationships with the sacraments changes as they grow and mature as individuals and meet new life challenges and circumstances.

In the whole process of initiation and the period of mystagogy, the role played by the Holy Spirit should not be neglected. The Holy Spirit is experienced in the events of Christian initiation. The Holy Spirit plays an important role in the whole of the initiation process. Jesus experienced the Holy Spirit at His baptism (Matt. 3:16) and the disciples experienced the power of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). This same Holy Spirit is experienced through the Word and the Sacraments of the Church. The RCIA is designated for the newly baptized to experience God and deepen relationship with Him through the help of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is encountered through the mystagogical preaching as Craig Alan Satterlee noted:

From Ambrose we learn that the Holy Spirit speaks and acts through a method of mystagogical preaching and is not constrained by it. The preacher is the vessel through whom the hearers might encounter and receive the Holy Spirit. The preacher is the voice of the Holy Spirit and they do not speak for themselves or by their own authority. Mystagogy takes seriously that Christ calls people to Himself through the Holy Spirit in personal encounter in order to give them new life and transform their way of living in the world.”¹³¹

Finally, through mystagogy, the newly baptized experience the grace of God the Father, the presence of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit and are equipped to live according to the mysteries we have received. Mystagogy helps us to discover how God's saving activity in Christ

¹³¹ Satterlee, 363.

is contained in the liturgical action, which is accomplished by providing a fuller, deeper experience of the mysteries. Mystagogy is structured to show how the continuity of God's saving activity in the Old and New Testaments extends into God's activity in the sacraments. Through this continuity, community comes to experience and understand that God is acting in the rites as God acted in the history of salvation recorded in the scripture.¹³²

¹³² Ibid., 363-364.

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