

# **Sharing in the Ministry of Jesus Christ: Liturgies for Post-Baptismal Catechesis and for Baptismal Renewal**

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Frank Henderson's Page on Liturgy and Medieval Women  
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## Introduction

The entire life of Jesus Christ -- including his death and resurrection -- was ministerial: it was oriented toward service. He lived a ministry on behalf of God; he lived a ministry for the sake of his sisters and brothers.

Jesus' ministry has many dimensions and expressions, among which are the following:

Prophet, Priest, Pastor

Word, Wisdom and Proclamation

Host and Guest, Friend and Servant

Life and Courage, Love and Compassion, Affirmation and Empowerment

In baptism (Christian initiation), Christians are joined to Jesus Christ and his body the church. We are therefore initiated into his life of service and into his many specific ministries. Through baptism in water and the Holy Spirit we are empowered to share in and continue the ministry of Jesus in our own day. The liturgy of baptism is, at least in part therefore, one of commissioning for ministry.

It is appropriate to remind ourselves that Christians are called to share in Jesus' ministry during the period immediately following baptism, as well as later in life whenever we wish to renew our baptismal covenant.

Although the Sunday eucharist is the principal regular liturgy of baptismal reflection, renewal and "re-commissioning" to ministry, the ministerial dimensions of baptism may be celebrated through other liturgies as well. Thus the brief liturgies provided here name, draw out, make more explicit, and bring to memory, the ministerial aspects of baptism. They do not, however, add anything to baptism; they do not contribute anything substantially new.

The liturgies provided here are inspired by parts of the liturgy of baptism or by elements that have been part of this liturgy in the course of Christian history. Thus the ministries of prophet, priest and pastor are celebrated through anointing with perfumed oil. A second anointing liturgy celebrates the ministries of life and courage, love and compassion, affirmation and empowerment. The ministries of word, wisdom, and proclamation are celebrated through the gentle touching of ears and mouth. The ministries of host and guest, friend and servant are celebrated through the washing of feet.

Each action is embedded in a prayer of thanksgiving, blessing and praise. Though this prayer is distinct in each of the four liturgies, in all cases it begins by praising, blessing and thanking God for creation and redemption in general, and then more specifically for empowering us in baptism to share in Jesus' ministry. The action (anointing, gentle touching, footwashing) is announced, we pray that God will support us in these ministries, and biblical persons who lived

these ministries may be named. Finally the action of anointing, gentle touching or footwashing is carried out.

The central action-prayer may be preceded, where appropriate, by prayers of thanksgiving over the materials used: the perfumed oil used in liturgies of anointing. In the case of footwashing, the thanksgiving over water serves a dual purpose as baptismal reminder and prayer over the elements used in the central action.

Other elements of baptismal reminder may be included in the initial parts of these liturgies: a blessing over light and the lighting of a candle; thanksgiving for water and sprinkling with water or touching the water. Proclaiming and responding to the word of God is always appropriate.

These resources may be used in several ways.

A The elements and texts offered here may be used as a complete liturgy with the following structure:

Gathering and Greeting  
Lighting of Candles and Blessing over Light  
Thanksgiving over Water and Sprinkling  
Scripture reading(s), Reflection, Prayers of Intercession, Song  
Thanksgiving over Perfumed Oil (when this is used)  
Anointing with Perfumed Oil or Gentle Touching or Footwashing  
Concluding prayer and Dismissal

B Some of the elements and texts offer here may be used within a eucharistic liturgy or liturgy of the word.

(I) In this case the Gathering and Greeting is omitted, as is the Concluding Prayer and Dismissal.

(Ii) The Blessing over Light and/or Thanksgiving over Water may be omitted or may be incorporated into the Introductory Rites of the eucharist or liturgy of the word.

(Iii) The Scripture Reading(s), Reflection and Intercessions are those of the eucharistic liturgy or liturgy of the word.

(Iv) The Thanksgiving over Perfumed Oil and Anointing / Touching / Footwashing may follow the intercessions of the eucharist or liturgy of the word.

These liturgies are intended to be models and examples, and need to be adapted to the particular circumstances of the celebration.

When these liturgies are used as separate services (A, above), leadership may be provided by a lay person or ordained minister, or by several leaders. To indicate this the rubrics often say, “A Leader”. When these liturgy are incorporated into a eucharist or liturgy of the word (B, above) the presiding minister may preside over the elements of these liturgies that are used, though other persons may participate in some of the prayers and actions, as seems appropriate.

# **Christ's Ministries of Prophet, Priest and Pastor: Anointing with Perfumed Oil**

## *Outline of the Rite*

Gathering  
Blessing over Light  
Thanksgiving over Water  
Scripture Readings, Reflection, Intercessions  
Thanksgiving over Perfumed Oil  
Anointing with Perfumed Oil  
Concluding Prayer

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## **Gathering**

The community gathers.  
A song may be sung.

A leader may say:

Remember your baptism and be thankful.  
*Response:* Thanks be to God.

## **Blessing over Light**

One or more candles may be lit.

A leader may gesture toward the candles as he/she says:

Blessed are you, O God,  
for in you we are called to be the light of the world,  
letting our light shine before others  
that they may see our good works and give glory to you;  
in you we are light, called to live as children of light.  
*Response:* Thanks be to God.

## **Thanksgiving over Water**

Water may be poured into a suitable vessel.

A leader may gesture toward the water as he/she says:

We give you thanks, O God, for the waters of the Widow of Zarephtha's cup:  
through them Elijah was refreshed, saved from death, and enabled to guide Israel.

We bless you for the water and blood  
that flowed from Christ's side as he hung upon the cross;  
in them he gave birth to his sisters and brothers.

Like spring showers upon the thirsty soil,  
let your Holy Spirit come upon us  
that we may be life-giving and creative  
and may know Christ in the breaking of the Bread.

*Response:* Thanks be to God.

Water may be sprinkled or touched by all.

## **Scripture reading(s), Reflection, Prayers of Intercession, Song**

### **Thanksgiving over Perfumed Oil**

Perfumed oil may be poured into a suitable vessel  
or this may be done ahead of time.

A leader may gesture toward the perfumed oil  
as he/she says:

Blessed are you, Holy God,  
you created spice-bearing plants  
and oil-bearing trees,  
and saw that it was good.

Judith and Esther anointed themselves  
and liberated your people from oppression.  
Faithful, loving women anointed the head and feet of Jesus,

preparing him for burial.  
And on Easter morn Mary Magdalene and other women  
took spices and went to anoint the body of Jesus – who was risen.

Bless us and this oil,  
that in our use of it you may be blessed.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, the Anointed One.

*Response: Amen.*

### **Anointing with Perfumed Oil**

If appropriate, those to be anointed come forward and stand so the gesture of anointing can be seen by the rest of the assembly.

A leader:

We bless and thank you, O God our creator and redeemer;  
you gather us under the shelter of your wings.

By water and the Holy Spirit  
you invite us to share your very own life,  
draw us into the community of the church,  
and empower us to share in Christ's continuing ministry.

*Response: Amen.*

The leader turns toward those to be anointed:

N. and N.,  
may the Holy Spirit support you  
as you share in Christ's prophetic ministry:  
Like Paul, speak God's word boldly;  
like Mary, prayerfully discern God's will.

*Response: Amen.*

May the Holy Spirit inspire you  
as you share in Christ's priestly ministry:  
Like Mary Magdalene, build up the church;  
like Peter, lead others in professing faith.

*Response: Amen.*

May the Holy Spirit encourage you  
as you share in Christ's pastoral ministry:  
Like Tabitha and Phoebe, perform works of justice and mercy;  
like Moses and Miriam, liberate others from oppression.

*Response:* Amen.

May this anointing with perfumed oil  
remind us that we have been baptized into  
the ministry of Jesus Christ.

Anointing is done in silence.

If appropriate, the persons just anointed return to their places.

## **Concluding Prayer and Dismissal**

A leader:

God of grace,  
you adopt us as sons and daughters.  
Let us live lives of praise and gratitude  
and be open to your love.  
We pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior.

*Response:* Amen.

Remember your baptism and be thankful.

*Response:* Thanks be to God.

A song may be sung.

# **Christ's Ministries of Word, Wisdom and Proclamation: Gentle Touching of Ears and Mouth**

## **Outline of the Rite**

Gathering  
Blessing over Light  
Thanksgiving over Water  
Scripture Readings, Reflection, Intercessions  
Touching of Ears and Mouth  
Concluding Prayer

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## **Gathering**

The community gathers.  
A song may be sung.

A leader may say:

Remember your baptism and be thankful.  
*Response:*: Thanks be to God.

## **Blessing over Light**

One or more candles may be lit.

A leader may gesture toward the candles as he/she says:

Blessed are you, O God:  
you have shone in our hearts  
to give knowledge of your glory in the face of Jesus Christ;  
you have enabled us to share in the inheritance  
of the saints in the light.

*Response:* Thanks be to God.

One or more candles may be lit.

## **Thanksgiving over Water**

Water may be poured into a suitable vessel.

A leader may gesture toward the water as he/she says:

We give you thanks, O God, for the waters of the Red Sea.  
Through them Moses and Miriam led the covenant people;  
in them you triumphed gloriously.

We bless you for the stormy waters of the Sea of Galilee.  
Jesus spoke, rebuked them,  
and the wind and the sea became calm.

Like rivers flowing from melting glaciers,  
let your Holy Spirit come upon us  
that we may be hospitable and caring  
and manifest Christ's love for all.

*Response:* Thanks be to God.

Water may be sprinkled or touched by all.

## **Scripture Reading(s), Reflection, Prayers of Intercessions, Song**

### **Touching of Ears and Mouth**

If appropriate, those to be touched come forward and stand so the gesture of touching can be seen by the rest of the assembly.

A leader

:

We bless and thank you, O God our creator and redeemer;  
you gather us under the shelter of your wings.

In baptism you adopt us as daughters and sons  
and send your Holy Spirit,  
empowering us to continue Christ's ministry of love, peace and justice.

*Response:* Amen.

The leader turns toward those to be touched.

N. and N.,  
as Mary of Nazareth heard God in the words of the angel;  
and as Mary of Bethany listened closely to her friend Jesus:  
so may the Holy Spirit strengthen you  
as you continue Christ's ministry of word and wisdom.

*Response: Amen..*

As Mary of Nazareth told the servants at Cana  
to do whatever Jesus told them;  
and as Mary Magdalene was commissioned by Jesus  
to tell the other disciples that he had risen:  
so may the Holy Spirit empower you  
as you continue Christ's proclamation of the Good News.

*Response: Amen.*

May this gentle touching of ears and mouth  
remind us that we have been baptized into  
the ministry of Jesus Christ..

Gentle touching is done in silence.

If appropriate, the persons just touched return to their places.

## Concluding Prayer and Dismissal

A Leader:

God of love,  
you chose us as your own.  
Give us the grace of your Spirit  
that we may be open to your love  
now revealed in children,  
    in every human face,  
    and in all of creation.

*Response:* Amen.

Remember your baptism and be thankful.

*Response:* Thanks be to God.

A song may be sung.

# **Christ's Ministries of Host and Guest, Friend and Servant: Washing of Feet**

## **Outline of the Rite**

Gathering  
Blessing over Light  
Thanksgiving over Water  
Scripture Readings, Reflection, Intercessions  
Washing of Feet  
Concluding Prayer

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## **Gathering**

The community gathers.  
A song may be sung.

A leader may say:

Remember your baptism and be thankful.  
*Response:* Thanks be to God.

## **Blessing over Light**

One or more candles may be lit.

A leader may gesture toward the candles as he/she says:

Blessed are you, O God,  
for the light of Christ, risen in glory;  
for Christ the Morning Star, which never sets;  
and for the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ,  
who is the image of God.  
*Response:* Thanks be to God.

## **Thanksgiving over Water**

Water may be poured into a suitable vessel.

A leader may gesture toward the water as he/she says:

We give you thanks for the waters of the desert rivers.  
Through them you gave drink to your chosen people,  
that they might declare your praise.

We bless you for the waters of baptism.  
Through them Lydia, Phoebe, Prisca, Junia and many others  
became our foremothers in the faith.

Like ocean waves upon the shore,  
let your Holy Spirit come upon us  
that we may be committed and persistent  
and may build up Christ's Body the church.

*Response:* Thanks be to God.

Water may be sprinkled or touched.

## **Scripture Reading(s), Reflection, Prayers of Intercession, Song**

### **Washing of Feet**

If appropriate, those whose feet are to be washed come forward and sit in places prepared for them. If possible, the gesture of footwashing is to be seen by the rest of the assembly.

Leader:

We bless and thank you, O God our creator and redeemer;  
you gather us under the shelter of your wings.

By water and the Holy Spirit  
you invite us to share your very own life,  
draw us into the community of the church  
and empower us to share Christ's continuing ministry.

*Response:* Amen.

The leader turns toward those whose feet are to be washed:

N. and N.,  
may the Holy Spirit affirm you  
as you share in Christ's ministry as host and guest.  
As the widows of the early Christian communities washed the feet of the saints;  
and as Jesus Christ washed and dried his disciples feet  
with the towel which he wore around his waist:  
so you are to do the same to those who lack shelter, food or love.  
*Response: Amen.*

May the Holy Spirit affirm you  
as you share in Christ's ministry as friend and servant.  
As the woman showed her great love for Jesus  
by washing his feet with her tears;  
and as Jesus Christ, on the night before he died,  
washed the feet of his close friends:  
so you are to do the same to the poor, the lonely, and the destitute.  
*Response: Amen.*

May this washing of feet  
remind us that we have been baptized into  
the ministry of Jesus Christ.

The washing of feet may take place in silence.

## Concluding Prayer and Dismissal

A Leader:

God who weaves the web of life:  
in baptism we become one with you  
in the threefold tapestry of your being.  
Weave us into solidarity with Christ,  
in whose name we pray.

*Response:* Amen.

Remember your baptism and be thankful.

*Response:* Thanks be to God.

A song may be sung.

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# **Christ's Ministries of Life and Courage, Love and Compassion, Affirmation and Empowerment: Anointing with Perfumed Oil**

## **Outline of the Rite**

Gathering  
Blessing over Light  
Thanksgiving over Water  
Scripture Readings, Reflection, Intercessions  
Thanksgiving over Perfumed Oil  
Anointing with Perfumed Oil  
Concluding Prayer

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## **Gathering**

The community gathers.  
A song may be sung.

A leader may say:

Remember your baptism and be thankful.  
*Response:* Thanks be to God.

## **Blessing over Light**

One or more candles may be lit.

A leader may gesture toward the candles as he/she says:

Blessed are you, O God,  
for you are our light and our salvation,  
you are our everlasting light and our glory;  
you brighten our darkness;  
your word is a lamp to our feet  
and a light to our path.

*Response:* Thanks be to God.

## **Thanksgiving over Water**

Water may be poured into a suitable vessel.

A leader may gesture toward the water as he/she says:

We give you thanks for the waters of the River Jordan.  
In them Naaman was washed clean of his leprosy.  
To them he was sent by the Israelite slave girl  
and the prophet Elisha.

We bless you for the waters of the woman's tears.  
With them she washed Jesus' feet.  
In return he said to her, "Your faith has saved you; Go in peace."

Like morning dew upon the grass,  
let your Holy Spirit come upon us  
that we may be full of wonder and delight  
and may witness to your peace and your power.

*Response:* Thanks be to God.

Water may be sprinkled or touched by all.

## **Scripture Reading(s), Reflection, Prayers of Intercession, Song**

### **Thanksgiving over Perfumed Oil**

Perfumed oil may be poured into a suitable vessel  
Or this may be done ahead of time.

A leader may gesture toward the perfumed oil as he/she says:

Blessed are you, Holy God:  
you created spice-bearing plants  
and oil-bearing trees,  
and you saw that it was good.

Ruth the Moabite anointed herself  
and became one of the foremothers of Jesus.  
You, O God, anointed your spouse Israel with oil,  
and entered into covenant with her.

Bless us and this oil,  
that in our use of it you may be blessed.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, the Anointed One.

*Response: Amen.*

## **Anointing with Perfumed Oil**

If appropriate, those to be anointed come forward and stand so the gesture of anointing can be seen by the rest of the assembly.

Leader:

We bless and thank you, O God our creator and redeemer;  
you gather us under the shelter of your wings.

In baptism you adopt us as daughters and sons  
and send your Holy Spirit,  
empowering us to continue Christ's ministry of love, peace and justice.

*Response: Amen.*

The leader turns toward those to be anointed and says:

N. and N.,  
remembering the women who took perfumes and spices to Jesus' tomb,  
we pray that God may bless you in your commitment  
to continue Jesus' ministry of giving life and courage.

*Response: Amen.*

Remembering the woman who anointed Jesus with tears and costly perfume,  
we pray that God may bless you in your commitment  
to continue Jesus' ministry of love and compassion.

*Response: Amen.*

Remembering the woman whom Jesus told us never to forget,  
we pray that God may bless you in your commitment to continue  
Jesus' ministry of affirmation and empowerment.

*Response: Amen.*

May this anointing with perfumed oil  
remind us that we have been baptized into  
the ministry of Jesus Christ..

Anointing takes place in silence.

If appropriate, those anointed return to their places.

## **Concluding Prayer and Dismissal**

A leader:

God of all goodness,  
in baptism you call us to share your very own life.  
Bestow upon us the Holy Spirit of reconciliation,  
and empower us to live out Christ's ministry of challenge and comfort.  
We pray in his name, Jesus Christ, our Savior.

*Response:* Amen.

Remember your baptism and be thankful.

*Response:* Thanks be to God.

A song may be sung.