

# LITURGY NEWSLETTER

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A Quarterly Newsletter prepared by the Liturgy Office of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

## News from Low Week meeting of Bishops' Conference

At its Low Week meeting the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales gave permission for work to begin in preparing a new translation of the Lectionary for Mass using the *New Revised Standard Version* translation of the Scriptures. Guidance for this important work has been provided by the Holy See in the recent Instruction *Liturgiam Authenticam*. Steps are presently being taken to ascertain whether, as in the past, other English-speaking conferences will wish to collaborate with the Bishops of England and Wales in this task. If so, a new mixed commission for this work will be established by the Congregation for Divine Worship. The hope is that any such new edition of the Lectionary will begin to be published at the same time as the English translation of the Roman Missal. That translation is presently being prepared for the Bishops' consideration by ICEL.

The Bishops also commended the work done by Fr Peter McDonough and his collaborators in the Catholic Deaf Association in preparing *Signs of God*, a lectionary for Sundays and feastdays for use at Masses celebrated for the Deaf community. The first two volumes, for years A and B of the 3 year Lectionary cycle have already been published by Redemptorist Publications. The third volume will be available later this year. This resource is the first of its kind in the world, and the initiative has received a very warm welcome from many quarters.

Permissions with regard to the preparation of the *General Instruction* for use in England and Wales, as requested by the Holy See, are still awaited. Publication of the General Instruction and the various formation materials prepared by the Department to assist its full implementation is expected during the autumn of 2003.

### Ecclesia de Eucharistia

Promulgated at the Mass of the Lord's Supper this year, Pope John Paul II's Encyclical speaks with passion and love of the Eucharist which "contains the Church's entire spiritual wealth: Christ himself, our Passover and living bread," gifted to the Father and shared with the Church. Key sections consider the dignity proper to Eucharistic Celebrations and the particular role of Mary, 'Woman of the Eucharist' in guiding the Church to a deeper understanding of the sacrament. The Department will be preparing materials to assist parishes to engage with the teaching of this Encyclical.

### Vox Clara welcomes recent ICEL initiatives

Vox Clara, the Committee of Bishops called to assist the Congregation in its work of considering the translation of liturgical texts met from March 12-14 in the Vatican. The Congregation for Divine Worship noted that "The committee considered a draft of a document, termed a *ratio translationis*, describing the spe-

cific application to the English language of the principles contained in *Liturgiam Authenticam*. Additionally, the committee examined translations of select parts of the *Missale Romanum* with a view toward providing the congregation with texts that might be considered exemplars of liturgical translations that conform to *Liturgiam Authenticam's* criteria.

'In particular, the committee was pleased to hear of recent initiatives by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy to assure the effective application of the principles of *Liturgiam Authenticam* to the processes and principles underlying the timely translation of the *Missale Romanum, editio typica tertia*, into the English language.'

### Marriage with a conscience

The Archdiocese of Milan is promoting simple marriage celebrations that highlight ways of celebrating the sacrament of marriage alert to the needs and circumstances of society at large and as an ideal occasion to manifest concrete love for the needy.

*The gift of unity is contained in "earthen vessels," which can break, and because of this require the greatest of care. It is necessary to cultivate among Christians a love that is committed to surmounting the differences; it is necessary to make the effort to overcome every barrier with incessant prayer, with persevering dialogue, and with a fraternal and concrete cooperation in favour of the poorest and neediest.*

From address of Pope John Paul at general audience during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. (January 22nd 2003)

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## Coming Events

**The Museum of the Mind: art and memory in world culture.**  
British Museum, London.  
17th April – 7th September 2003.  
Admission free.  
The exhibition and its catalogue explore issues concerning memory and ritual in culture and religion.  
<http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk>

**Society of St Gregory Summer School**  
*Grace as from a fountain*  
29 July – 2 August 2003  
Worth Abbey  
[www.ssg.org.uk](http://www.ssg.org.uk)  
Conference details:  
Mrs Helen Murphy  
01933 680 955  
[helen.murphy@ssg.org.uk](mailto:helen.murphy@ssg.org.uk)

**RCIA Network Conference**  
3–5 September 2003  
Hinsley Hall, Leeds  
Contact Nicky Stevens  
01329 835 583  
[nstevens@portsmouth-dio.org.uk](mailto:nstevens@portsmouth-dio.org.uk)

**Panel of Monastic Musicians Annual Conference**  
St Gabriel's, All Hallows, Ditchingham  
22–26 September 2003.  
The theme *Psallam Spiritu et Mente*—an exploration of the psalms from the two angles of spirituality and music.  
Further details  
Fr Mark ocsco,  
Mt St Bernard Abbey, Coalville, Leicester, LE67 5UL

**Sacrosanctum Concilium Study Day**  
Organised by Heythrop College in collaboration with the Department for Christian Life and Worship  
Saturday 6 December 2003  
Heythrop College, London  
contact Andrew Cameron Mowat [a.cameron-mowat@heythrop.ac.uk](mailto:a.cameron-mowat@heythrop.ac.uk)

Actor-director Mel Gibson interviewed by Zenit.org on his forthcoming film on the Passion of Christ.

*"I don't think other films have tapped into the real force of this story. I mean, have you seen any of the others? They are either inaccurate in their history, or they suffer from bad music or bad hair. This film will show the Passion of Jesus Christ just the way it happened.*

*I'm doing what I've always done: telling stories I think are important in the language I speak best: film. I think most great stories are hero stories. People want to reach out and grab at something higher, and vicariously live through heroism, and lift their spirit that way.*

*There is no greater hero story than this one—about the greatest*

Suggestions for include renting reception premises from a social cooperative for the prevention of juvenile delinquency, or having a dinner catered by a relatively low-cost agricultural cooperative. A social cooperative enables marginalized persons to assist with the production and distribution of wedding invitations and booklets.

The archdiocese suggests the names of wedding-gift stores that, in addition to conducting an ethical business, contribute to the funding of development projects in the Third World.

Instead of buying an expensive wedding dress, brides can rent a dress from the Community and Family Association.

The honeymoon can be planned with a care for social issues too: Recommended travel agencies in Milan conduct 'responsible tourism' in Brazil or Venezuela.

### Divine Mercy Indulgence

The Apostolic decree giving full details of the indulgences recently attached to this devotion are available from the Department website.

### NRSV Lectionary

Readers of the last Liturgy Newsletter might have thought we'd made faster progress than expected with the NRSV Lectionary for England and Wales. Churchill Systems are advertising a new NRSV lectionary available from them on CD-Rom from Churchill. It is not the Lectionary approved for use in the Catholic Church in England and Wales, but an NRSV edition of the revised Common Lectionary prepared for the use of the Church of England and used now by various Christian denominations. This Lectionary has many things in common with the Roman Rite's Lectionary for Mass, but also departs from it in a good many ways. Progress is being made with our NRSV Lectionary, but not that fast!

### ACE Awards 2003

The Art and Christianity Enquiry (ACE) Trust is inviting for a series of significant awards. The Awards are the first of their

kind in this country to recognise good practice in responding to the challenges of creating and enhancing spaces for Christian worship and for school communities. The winners of the Awards will be announced on 26th November 2003 at the Royal Society of Arts, London

Specially commissioned art and architecture are vital to the living heritage of the church's worship. The judging panels will be looking for theological imagination and artistic excellence in equal measure. Awards are offered for:

- a Commissioned Artwork in Ecclesiastical Space
- Religious Architecture,
- gardens reflecting spiritual and community values

Entries close on 30th June, 2003 and the winners of the Awards of £3,000 each will be announced from a shortlist of three at a special event on 18th November, 2003.

ACE have also recently appointed their first Loans to Churches Project Officer, Paul Bayley. He is anxious to hear from interested parties within the art world and from places of worship interested in taking part in a temporary loan scheme.

### Religious Festivals of the World Religions

Each year, on the occasion of the Festivals of the Major World Religions, the President of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue, Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald, sends out a letter of greeting to each Bishops' Conference for circulation

to members of the relevant Faith. These beautifully crafted letters are, in essence, meditations on shared values and aspirations. They invite an ideal response to topical issues such as the promotion of peace, family values, the dignity of the person and the value of human life and the importance of education as the key to promoting religious freedom and respect for people of different religious traditions.

Three times a year on the Buddhist Feast of *Vesak*, the Hindu Festival of *Diwali* and the Muslim Festival of *Id al-Fitr*, the Committee for Other Faiths circulates each letter of Greeting to all the Bishops and, with an accompanying letter from Bishop Kevin McDonald, Chair of the Committee, to national bodies and to diocesan Inter-faith Co-ordinators, for more local circulation. Copies of the texts of these letters may be obtained from the Committee.

Through this outreach these greetings are now reaching an ever wider audience and are well received and appreciated.

Clearly, personal contact is by far the most effective means of reaching people though this is not always possible. Feedback suggests that the Greeting is proving to be an extremely valuable means of making and fostering relationships with members of Other Faiths.

Often parishioners undertake to share this greeting with faith communities situated in their parishes. It is a simple and effective way to assist in promoting a culture of dialogue at local level.

### University of Wales, Lampeter MA in Liturgy

This course offers an opportunity for deepening and developing an understanding of the Liturgy and its place and function in the life of the Church. It is especially designed to be of assistance to lay and ordained ministers of the various Christian denominations in enhancing their ministerial skills.

This course is offered in part-time and distance modes

For further information contact:

Fr. Allen Morris

Department of Christian Life and Worship

Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales

39 Eccleston Square, London, SW1V 1PL

Tel: 020 7901 4850 Fax: 020 7901 4821

Email: [lifeworsh@cbcew.org.uk](mailto:lifeworsh@cbcew.org.uk) [www.liturgyoffice.org.uk](http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk)

At a recent Conference organised by the *Churches Funeral Group* there was consideration given to the liturgical response to the burial or cremation of retained body parts. Revd Peter Speck formerly Senior Chaplain to Southampton General Hospital spoke of the heightened emotion that has surrounded the discovery that body parts of loved ones have been retained. The controversy surrounding the practices of Alder Hey and Bristol hospitals has raised the public consciousness with regard to organ retention. It is expected that there will be further publicity shortly as all hospitals come in line with present recommended best practice.

Peter Speck stressed the need for clarity on the part of ministers that what was being offered by way of liturgical services was not a 'new' funeral service, but a service that was completing the service which had already taken place: be that through a re-uniting with the previously buried body of those parts not available initially or a completion of the act of cremation of the rest of the body.

The *Order of Christian Funerals* does not directly address this matter. However the following extract from *Cremation or Burial of Body Parts*, an article by Peter Speck, may be helpful to those assisting families faced with such a situation:

"In keeping with good practice for the conduct of any funeral, these ceremonies call for careful preparation by clergy and

others. The prime object of this event is to try and bring some healing to a family deeply distressed by recent events. The last thing that one wants is for a major mistake in the spelling of names, the use of a perceived insensitive phrase, or for the personal feelings of professionals regarding the issue of organ retention to get in the way of the prime focus of the event.

Body parts should not be handed directly to a family but only via a nominated funeral director. The erosion of trust following Alder Hey may lead some families to demand proof. This could be supplied by the director, their solicitor or some family members who may wish to view the tissues or organs to assure themselves that what they have been told actually is there.

In most Trusts the organ would be handed to the funeral director via the mortuary for placing into a suitable wood casket or other opaque container. There should be a small nameplate with a brief description such as 'heart of baby N.N. etc.

Burials should preferably be in the grave space adjacent to the coffin of the deceased, i.e. on top or at the head end of the coffin. Opening the coffin should clearly be avoided whenever possible as a Home Office licence is required and families may not fully appreciate the degree of disturbance to the body of the deceased and the added distress.

At the crematorium a tiny casket on the very large catafalque can look miniscule. It can

reader to take up his or her own appropriate response to the needs and situation of their local Church.

The first, **Composing Music for Worship**, addresses the topic of liturgical music. It is a book relying largely but not exclusively on Anglican musicians, (there is a stunning reflection by James MacMillan) but the issues each one raises, about musical form and style and function, about participation, are at least as important in the Catholic

## Second funerals?

be helpful if a small floral display can be placed about 18" or half a metre from the front edge and the casket placed in front of that. The parent or other family member may wish to carry the casket, especially if they carried the coffin. By necessity the ceremony is short as, in effect, it is a committal. The words chosen by whoever conducts the ceremony are important. The following are suggested forms of words:

- God of time and eternity, we remember N.N. who has died and been laid to rest. As she remains in our love, though parted from us, we pray that you will keep her in your infinite and perfect care; and that one day we shall enjoy friendship with each other in your presence, where every tear shall be wiped away. Amen.
- This young life will always be part of us because N.N. was part of our family's dreams and hopes. She shared God's mystery of life and inner warmth. We honour her memory now and we lay her to rest completely as we re-unite her brain with her body, knowing that she is already complete in your presence.
- Lord God, we thank you for N.N.'s life. We pray that you will bring healing to her family and all those who mourn her death, that they may experience your healing love and feel supported at this difficult time."

love one can have, which is to lay down one's life for someone. The Passion is the biggest adventure story of all time. I think it's the biggest love-story of all time; God becoming man and men killing God—if that's not action, nothing is.

The story has inspired art, culture, behaviour, governments, countries... It's a pivotal event in history that has made us what we are today. Believers and nonbelievers alike, have all been affected by it.

So many people are searching for meaning in life, asking themselves a lot of questions. They'll come looking for answers. Some will find them, some won't."

The only languages heard in the film will be Latin and Aramaic, and there will not be English subtitles. Gibson observes: "Caravaggio's paintings don't have subtitles, but people get the message. The Nutcracker Ballet doesn't have subtitles, but people get the message. The image will overcome the language barrier. That's my hope.

And I think it's almost counterproductive to say some of these things in a modern language. It makes you want to stand up and shout out the next line, like when you hear "To be or not to be" and you instinctively say to yourself, "That is the question."

But if you hear the words spoken as they were spoken at the time, it can kind of stun you. I've seen that happen when we're working. It gets a clarity to it through the acting, through the nuances of the characters, the movement of the camera – it's the movement, the timing, everything. All of a sudden it's very, very clear to me. That's when I cut and move on."

## Book Reviews

Recent years have again seen the politicisation of the liturgy. Whatever the rights and wrongs of the various positions, and the reasons for people adopting them, the politicisation frustrates the fundamental work necessary for liturgical renewal in our dioceses and parishes. All the more reason to welcome recent publications which rather than offering firm conclusions, raise pertinent issues and challenge the

Church, if not more so. These authors are often inspiring in their reflections. The insights of these creative artists will provide pastoral liturgists with much to reflect on.

**Liturgy in a Postmodern World**, comprises of almost exclusively Catholic authors, derives from a Jesuit Conference held in Rome in 2002. There are enormously helpful articles from Cardinal Danneels, Robert Taft and Timothy Radcliffe among others.

## Magazine Subscription Service

The Liturgy Office hopes to offer a one-stop, easy payment subscription service to English language liturgy magazines from overseas. Full details and form on website.

### Further Information

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**Redemptorist Publications**  
01420 88805  
www.shineonline.net

**Ecclesia de Eucharistica**  
to be published by CTS  
020 7640 0042  
www.cts-online.org.uk

**Milan Archdiocese**  
www.diocesi.milano.it/nozze/  
nozze\_solidali.htm

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**ACE**  
www.acetrust.org  
Paul Bradley  
07895 504572.

**Committee for Other Faiths**  
Secretary Ann Noonan  
020 7901 4841

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**Composing Music for Worship,**  
ed. by Stephen Darlington and  
Alan Kreider.  
Canterbury Press, 2003.

**Liturgy in a Postmodern World,**  
ed. by Keith Pecklers SJ.  
Continuum Books, 2003.

## Liturgy Newsletter

www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/  
Newsletter.html

### Editorial

Revd Allen Morris  
Liturgy Office  
39 Eccleston Square  
London SW1V 1PL  
020 7901 4850  
020 7901 4821 (fax)  
lifeworsh@cbcew.org.uk

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# Discover and live the beauty of prayer and of the liturgy

*The Holy Father has chosen to offer meditations on the psalms at recent general audiences. On 26 February he spoke on Psalm 150.*

1. Psalm 150, which we have just proclaimed, resounds for the second time in the liturgy of lauds: a festive hymn, an alleluia to the rhythm of music. It is the ideal seal to the whole Psalter, the book of praise, of song, of the liturgy of Israel.

The text is one of amazing simplicity and transparency. We must just allow ourselves to be drawn by the insistent call to praise the Lord: 'Praise God... give praise... give praise!' At the beginning, God is presented in two fundamental aspects of his mystery. Without a doubt, he is transcendent, mysterious, beyond our horizon: His royal abode is the heavenly 'sanctuary,' his 'mighty firmament,' an inaccessible fortress to man. And yet, he is near to us: He is present in the 'sanctuary' of Zion and acts in history through his 'mighty deeds,' which reveal and enable one to experience 'his exceeding greatness!' (see verses 1-2).

2. Hence, between heaven and earth a sort of channel of communication is established in which the action of the Lord and the song of praise of the faithful meet. The liturgy unites the two sanctuaries, the earthly temple and the infinite heavens, God and man, time and eternity.

During the prayer we begin a kind of ascent toward the divine light and at the same time we experience a descent of God who adapts himself to our limitation to hear us and speak to us, to meet us and save us. The Psalmist immediately offers us aids for this prayerful meeting: recourse to musical instruments of the orchestra of the temple of Jerusalem, such as the trumpet, harp, lute, strings, pipe and cymbals. Moving in procession was also part of the Jerusalem rite (see Psalm 117[118]:27). The very same appeal echoes in Psalm 46:8: 'play masterfully.'

3. Hence, it is necessary, to constantly discover and live the beauty of prayer and of the liturgy. One must pray to God not only with theologically precise formulas, but also in a beautiful and dignified way.

In this connection, the Christian community must make an examination of conscience so that the beauty of music and song will return increasingly to the liturgy. It is necessary to purify worship of deformations, of careless forms of expression, of ill-prepared music and texts, which are not very suited to the grandeur of the act being celebrated.

Significant, in this connection, is the appeal of the Letter to the Ephesians to avoid intemperance and vulgarity, to leave room for the purity of liturgical hymns. 'And do not get drunk on wine, in which lies debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another [in] psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and playing to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks always and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father' (Ephesians 5:18-20).

4. The Psalmist ends by inviting 'everything living' (see Psalm 150: 5), literally 'every breath,' 'everything that breathes,' an expression that in Hebrew designates 'every being that breathes,' especially 'every living man' (see Deuteronomy 20:16; Joshua 10:40; 11:11,14). Hence, in divine praise the human creature is involved with his voice and heart. With him are called ideally all living beings, all creatures in which there is a breath of life (see Genesis 7:22), so that they will raise their hymn of gratitude to the Creator for the gift of existence.

St Francis follows this universal invitation with his thought-provoking 'Canticle to Brother Sun,' in which he invites to praise and bless the Lord for all creatures, reflection of his beauty and of his goodness (see Franciscan Sources, 263).

5. All the faithful should participate, in a special way, in this song, as the Letter to the Colossians suggests: 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God' (3:16).

In this respect, St. Augustine, in his 'Commentaries on the Psalms,' sees symbolized in the musical instruments the saints who praise God: 'You, saints, are the trumpet, the Psalter, the zither, the tympani, the choir, the strings and the organ, and the cymbals of joy that emit beautiful sounds, which play harmoniously. You are all these things. When hearing the Psalm, one must not think of things of little value, of transitory things, or of theatrical instruments.' In reality, 'every spirit that praises the Lord' is a voice of song to God (Commentaries on the Psalms, IV, Rome, 1977, pp. 934-935).

The highest music, therefore, is the one that arises from our hearts. It is precisely this harmony that God wants to hear in our liturgies.