

Spirit of the Season

Lent 2004

Liturgical Year C www.liturgyoffice.org.uk

With an eye to change



'To live is to change; to be perfect is to change often' (Cardinal Newman)

An image or a video of ourselves is often a surprise – 'I should never wear green', 'Do I really sound like that?' When we come across an old photograph we can be surprised when we think of then and now, how much we have changed. It may be just external appearances, different hair cut, different fashions or who we were with, but often we realise we are no longer who we once were. Sometimes this realisation will be accompanied by feelings of bemusement or regret; at other times with relief and pleasure.

Each year Lent gives us an opportunity to look back and see where we have grown in faith and also in preparation for Easter to reflect on how we need to change and grow. The story of the Prodigal Son on the 4th Sunday of Lent offers an image of the son who reflecting on his experiences realises what he had missed and not appreciated before, and so returns to the welcoming embrace of his father. This Lent try to read the Sunday Gospel in the days before and then maybe take a phrase that invites you to change and grow and reflect upon in your prayer.

Lord,
during this
Lenten season
nourish us
with your word of life
and make us one
in love and prayer.



Opening Prayer
Wednesday, Week 3 of Lent
Roman Missal

FAQ

Can I obtain back issues? Yes, every issue is posted on the Liturgy Office Website (www.liturgyoffice.org.uk) as a PDF file.





Meaning: Amen—Let it be so. I agree with that.

From: This is originally a Hebrew word. (Common usage of the word is probably due to the first collection of written prayers for Mass—a Sacramentary—using the Latin language, the first language of the church to be widely used.)

Usage: Used as an acclamation at the end of prayers to show our agreement with, and the need to be associated with, what has just been prayed.

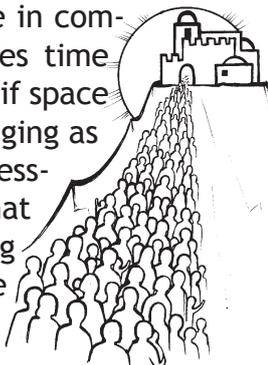
Word colour: Green?

Singing: Singing together expresses unity; so singing 'Amen' expresses our common consent. 'Amen' can be a strong acclamation (Mass of Creation – Marty Haugen), a moment of reflection (Gathering Mass – Paul Inwood), or an exuberant shout of praise (Amen Siakidumisa-Amen, praise the Lord – South African). Why not connect with our tradition with a bit of Plainsong?



Processing to Communion

Processions are something Catholics 'do'; they are an integral part of our liturgy. They are a sign of our unity, and that we are pilgrim people on a journey to our heavenly home. At Mass the Communion procession expresses both our communion with one another and the Church, and that we receive food for our journey. How we process should help show this. Reverent and worthy of what we about to receive but also aware of our neighbour with whom we are in communion. To do this well takes time and may need some planning if space is cramped and awkward. Singing as we process is a way of expressing unity and articulating what we are doing. Try something memorable like Bernadette Farrell's *We are one family* (Share the Light).



The Altar is the central physical object used at Mass. This table at which the Eucharist is offered itself symbolises Christ, and for that reason in a church is normally made



of stone and fixed. It stands in the centre of the gathered people as the very cornerstone of their worship. It is venerated by the priest as he enters the church at the beginning of Mass. It is venerated by the priest at the end of Mass. It is to the altar that the readers bow in reverence as they come to proclaim the word.

Even when we celebrate Mass elsewhere, and where we often have to use a temporary altar, it is important that the 'altar' is prepared in a way that indicates its importance, and the importance of the actions which take place there. The altar should always be of ample size to carry the sacred vessels, the candles, the missal - there should never be a sense of things being cramped there, never a sense that the priest cannot celebrate Mass there without proper dignity. The altar should be carefully dressed - a clean white cloth generously covering the table top always, and maybe the whole table if what is otherwise seen would compromise the sense of its worthiness for the celebration. Flowers should not be placed on the altar itself, but may be placed around the altar to draw attention to its particular importance.



The book of psalms in the bible is our first hymnbook. Christians have always used psalms as part of their worship. At Mass the psalm is part of the Liturgy of the Word articulating our response to the readings. It may be daunting to open the Lectionary and see different psalms for every day. It is perhaps tempting therefore to dismiss the psalm as unusable or replace it with a song or hymn. The Lectionary provides a solution to this problem with a selection of 'Common Psalms' arranged by season. Not only can this psalm replace the psalm given at any Mass during the season it also means that you can get to know a psalm well, begin to pray it, let it help shape the spirit of the season.

For Lent one of the psalms is Ps 90 (91). A good setting is *Be with me, Lord* by Marty Haugen (Laudate). Why not start with just the refrain.

Liturgy Planning Sheet

In the previous part of this series the building blocks of liturgy were laid out. On this page a basic structure for preparing Collective Acts of Worship is given. The four part structure of Gather-Listen-Respond-Go Forth is common to many liturgies – it is one way of understanding the structure of the Mass. The two central parts have greater importance than the beginning and the end. The building blocks (Environment; Gesture; Ministry; Music; Prayer; Scripture; Silence; Symbolic Action: Words) will make up each part – some, like music, will be found a number of times.

Preparing

When are we celebrating? Who will be celebrating? Where will we celebrating?

Environment

Gather

To become a gathered assembly. To prepare us to participate—to listen and respond.

Listen

Participating in the Word of God (readings from scriptures, singing the psalms), is common to all Catholic worship.

Respond

Our response can be made up silence, reflection, prayer, symbolic action or song.

Go Forth

In our liturgical celebrations we offer praise to God; we are also strengthened in our mission to live as Christ in the world.

Action

Which ministries are needed? What needs to be prepared?

Singing the Lord's Song – Ministry of Musicians and Singers

The responsibility?

Musicians and singers assist the assembly's song.

They choose and lead the music appropriate for the different forms of prayer and types of congregation.

There are a range of ministers—cantors and psalmists, animators, choirs, accompanists—each with their particular area of responsibility. Musicians need to work collaboratively with each other as well as with other ministers and with the assembly as a whole.

Now let's take it a bit deeper...

Musicians

A psalmist, a cantor, an organist, other instrumentalists, a choir, and a director of music assist the assembly's full participation in singing the songs, responses, and acclamations which are constitutive elements of the liturgy. These ministers of music exercise a liturgical function within the assembly and by their role help to add beauty and solemnity to the celebration.

Celebrating the Mass 43



The Ministers

Music is servant of the liturgy. Therefore those responsible for choosing the music for any particular liturgy have to understand the nature and shape of that liturgy and the place and function of music in it.

A principal concern for musicians must be "How is what we are doing assisting the assembled believers to express and share the gift of faith that is within them and to nourish and strengthen their interior

commitment of faith. It should heighten the texts so that they speak more fully and more effectively."

The use of musical instruments can add a great deal in Masses with children, especially if they are played by the children themselves. The playing of instruments will help to sustain the singing or to encourage the reflection of the children; sometimes in their own fashion instruments express festive joy and the praise of God.

Care should always be taken, however, that the musical accompaniment does not overpower the singing or become a distraction rather than a help to the children. (Directory for Masses with Children 32)

The witness of children and adults, pupils and teachers and others collaborating in their music making is a very effective way of overcoming the tension that can exist with worship in school—that is seen as provided for the children by the teachers, rather than something that the assembly of the faithful does together.

Particularly when other adults are invited to the time of worship there can be a tendency to see the musicians as performers, as if in a concert. When they are not carrying out their particular ministry they should participate in the liturgy in the same ways as other members of the assembly, listening attentively to the readings, being drawn into prayer, joining in the assembly's song. Because of the visibility of the musician what they do

when not actively making music is very important.

The assembly

Singing is one of the most potent of all expressions of communal awareness and common purpose. Through the music, through their joining in the common song, members of the assembly express and are drawn more deeply into the celebration of faith.

The music of our common prayer should provide the assembly with the opportunity to take for example psalm texts to heart and have them available for our private times of prayer. This private prayer with liturgical texts in its turn will renew and enrich the times of common prayer.

Good practice

It is important to develop a repertoire that serves the liturgy. A few well chosen pieces that are known will provide a strong core. This will assist effective liturgy preparation.

What we offer to God in worship should be worthy. Care should be taken in preparing music, with special attention to communicating what is sung.

Getting in touch

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