

# Spirit of the Season

## Winter 2005

Liturgical Year A [www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/SOS](http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/SOS)

### Doing the Rite Thing

Over the Christmas holidays we will have had the opportunity to participate in many celebrations: with family; with friends; at church; on New Year's Eve. Celebrations are ritual occasions. Though we may have our own personal rituals, like how we get up in the morning, we cannot celebrate alone.



On Christmas Day we celebrate with friends and family, we wear our best clothes, we exchange gifts and share special food and drink. Each family will have its own pattern for the day. For example, some open presents on getting up, some wait until after lunch. We can get so used to our own rituals that when we experience another family's way of doing Christmas we can find it strange and disconcerting.

All the elements that make Christmas Day a ritual celebration are present when we celebrate Mass. For example rituals have clear patterns, we do one thing before we can do another. Mass has a clear pattern or structure.



All liturgical celebrations are ritual but not every ritual is a liturgy. Ritual is not an end in itself but it is the ritual that enables us to celebrate together. At Mass the ritual, following the given pattern of the Church, enables us to celebrate.

When we celebrate we always have a reason for celebrating. At Mass we celebrate God's love for us and how we are to share to that love. The better we do the ritual, the easier it is to participate and celebrate.



- What are the many different ways in which we celebrate as a Catholic School?

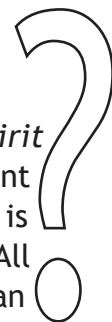
Lord,  
be the beginning  
and end  
of all that we do  
and say.  
Prompt our actions  
with your grace,  
and complete them  
with your all-powerful help.  
We make our prayer  
through our Lord.  
*Morning Prayer, Monday Week 1*



### FAQ

#### Can I get back issues?

The first issue of *Spirit of the Season* was sent out in 2000. This is issue number 22. All the previous issues can be found on the Liturgy Office website  
[[www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/SOS](http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/SOS)]



# Epiphany

# Glossary

Being back in school for Epiphany lends itself to a celebration of Christmas without the pressure of the whole 'Christmas thing'.

For the Epiphany two ideas come to mind: Incense grains used in Collective acts of worship or at church could be processed from each class base to a central gathering and put into a fine container for use then or throughout the year. This is one way of modelling homage.

Combine with or separately – banners – big banners. They could announce what Jesus is to the world. Jesus is Lord, King, Peace, Love etc. Make as many as you can or one per class to use in a grand gathering procession and in the liturgy.

If you do not already have some banners to lead processions you may want to consider building up a collection over the year.

The design of the banner might involve using lemon juice, where the design will be, to take colour out of voile fabric – ideal for this job – and when dry use a marker pen or paints. (The lemon juice will remove the colour from the design area making it easier to paint onto white.) Support in two ways: by a short cane and string or a larger bamboo pole could be used for height allowing the fabric to flow creating an instant fiesta!



**Epiphany:** Solemnity—6 January (Greek *epiphaneia*—a royal visit or revelation). Epiphany is the celebration of Christ, revealed as Universal Saviour. In the Roman Rite it commemorates St Matthew's account of the coming of the Magi or Wise Men to the infant Jesus and their gifts of gold (revealing him as King), incense (showing him as God) and myrrh (telling of his death). Epiphany also refers to the baptism of Christ and the sign of Christ turning water into wine at Cana.



**Incense:** (Latin *incensum*—something burnt) Any one of a number of natural resins which when heated give off a sweet aroma and smoke. Incense is an ancient accompaniment to worship and in Christian use is burnt in a censer or thurible. The smell was considered an offering to God, a symbol of prayer rising, and a source of purification. Frankincense, brought by the Magi to Christ, is one of these resins.

**Redemption** (Latin *redemptio*—buying back/ransoming) The name give to the saving Death and Resurrection of Christ. **Redeemer**— A title of Christ who 'redeemed' creation from slavery to sin by the paschal mystery.

from *A Basic Catholic Dictionary*  
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## Looking ahead: 2005-2006

All Saints	Tuesday 1 November 2005
First Sunday of Advent	Sunday 27 November (beginning of Liturgical Year B (Sundays), II (Weekdays))
The Epiphany of the Lord	Friday 6 January 2006
Education Day	Sunday 12 February
Ash Wednesday	Wednesday 1 March
Easter Sunday	Sunday 16 April
The Ascension of the Lord	Thursday 25 May
Pentecost Sunday	Sunday 4 June (followed by Week 9 of Ordinary Time)
The Body & Blood of the Lord	Thursday 15 June
St Peter & St Paul	Thursday 29 June

The Liturgy Office website offers a wide range of information about the Liturgical Calendar including full details for 2005-2006 [[www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Calendar](http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Calendar)].

## Listening

Sometimes it is so easy to give all our attention to the children who have things to do at Mass – like a reading – that we can forget the others.

Do you know the saying that God gave us one mouth but two ears, so we should spend twice as much time listening as we do talking? Well,

when it comes to a reading at Mass there will be one mouth reading but hundreds of ears listening. What help can we give to those hundreds of ears for their better listening?

After all, we don't read the readings at Mass just because it says in the Missal this is what is supposed to happen. They are read because we need to hear the word of God, a word alive and active, and which offers encouragement and hope to a people often in great need of both.



The word is read that we might hear it, and hear it well. Again it is not enough that we simply 'hear' it – allowing the sound waves vibrate on our ear drums. We need to take these heard words to our hearts and consider what they say to us, what they mean to us, and how they invite us to something new.

If we remember that the reason for the words being read is for us to listen – then we will not race on from one reading to

another. We will know that there needs to be a pause and silence, while we listen more deeply.

When the spoken word has ceased we listen to its silent echoes in our hearts and minds. And as we listen and start to understand, we begin – still in the silence of our hearts and minds – to respond. Maybe what we hear is God's word of encouragement – and we can silently thank him. Maybe what we hear is a challenge to us, a reminder of something we've done which we ought not to have done – and we can silently say we are sorry.

Adults might be able to do this for themselves. To help children to know this is what we are to do when we listen to God's word it can be useful, after the period of quiet, to ask questions about what they heard, what it meant, how they are responding.

We hear the Word together although our response and understanding may be individual.

Children will need guidance on how to hear the Word. Not only will their physical stance be important but the internal processes too. Encourage children to try to understand the words, to remember a short phrase. Ask "what is God saying to you about your life? What does the reading remind you of?" With a very familiar story ask "what have you not noticed before? How have you grown up since you last heard these words?"



## Hearing

As educators, we spend much of our day encouraging children not only to hear words that are being spoken but to understand and process them. Many children have learned to look as though they are listening but in fact have drifted in their minds to another activity. Others can fidget constantly but fully process everything that has been said. How do we participate by hearing well? Simple physical pointers can help listeners: look at the reader (notice our ears are facing in the same direction as our eyes!), sit in a comfortable way – perhaps with hands palm-up on the knees – inviting Christ in the Word in, keep breathing deeply and slowly,

ask the reader to look up at the listeners.

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Always stress that we hear the Word **together** although our response and understanding may be individual. We can also 'hear' in silence as we focus our sight on a candle or close our eyes.

## Full, conscious and active

Liturgy becomes liturgy for us when we are able to take part in it. Until then we are not the participants that liturgy expects, but are 'only' observers.

A recent experience made this point very clearly. A school liturgy was being celebrated and the Year Ones were sitting at the front, 'watching' but not engaged – until it came to the Gospel Acclamation. They'd been learning about this. They knew how and why we did it. So they came to life, and sang the Alleluia with gusto.

The worshipping community in school is very diverse - age, culture, experience. Often we can make assumptions about what children and adults will know or be able to do that are unrealistic. For example:

- If a child's regular experience of worship is in a Polish Church they may know the 'Holy, holy' in Polish or Latin, but not in English.
- Some will be familiar with a sung setting of the Eucharistic acclamations in English, but not know the words to 'say'.
- Some Catholic children will be entirely unfamiliar with the Mass, if they don't attend the parish celebration on Sundays and it is rarely celebrated in the school.

Sometimes our expectations about inclusivity are in tension with the need to respect difference, and to help the participation of all. Are we justified in assuming that a Muslim child will join with us in making the sign of the Cross, or come forward for a blessing at Communion?

Of their nature some Catholic liturgies can only be fully participated in by Catholics – for example the Mass. The reception of Holy Communion is something only open to Catholic children, and only after they have been properly prepared for the Sacrament. It is debatable how appropriate celebration of Mass in school is if the Catholics present do not regularly celebrate Mass in their parish.

Other forms of Catholic worship are accessible to a wider range of people. For example Liturgies of the Word, or liturgies based around symbols of our faith (for example candles or blessed water). These are more 'open' in the ways people can respond to them, enabling people to engage 'from where they are at' rather than us making assumptions about where that will be.

Participation happens when we personally respond to what we are doing together. If we are truly to include all in our school liturgy, we need to consider carefully what all can do, and will want to do.



**G**od of perfect peace, violence and cruelty can have no part with you.

*May those who are at peace with one another hold fast to the good will that unites them; may those who are enemies forget their hatred and be healed.*

*We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.*

*Amen*

Prayer for Peace, Roman Missal



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