

Spirit of the Season

Easter 2008

Liturgical Year A www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/SOS

Rites and Responsibilities

A central theme of the Second Vatican Council which transformed Catholicism in the later 20th century was the need to adapt liturgy to local culture world-wide (read more in *Sacrosanctam Concilium* paragraph 40 onwards).

Part of British culture has always been a welcome and appreciation of immigrants, many of whom are initially invited to our shores to plug gaps in the employment market. As a universal church, Catholic communities have a responsibility to preserve and encourage our children's sense of their heritage. Did you know, for example, that St. Patrick is a patron of Nigeria as well as Ireland?

Which patronal feast days with a multi-ethnic dimension might you celebrate in your community? Multi-culturalism enables us to incorporate valid Catholic religious traditions from other countries into our own practice, reinvigorating rituals which have lapsed, such as processions, once popular in England and Wales, but which enjoy continued popularity in Latin America.

Think about the cultural backgrounds of the children and staff. Use fabrics from other countries and look to have a variety of crosses in the school that reflect the universal church. Ask families to bring back items from holidays abroad.

With all your purchases, find out where the item was made. Since our liturgies urge us towards justice we should be concerned about the hands that made the things we use. There are many fair trade companies that can supply suitable materials. *Spiritual Garments* 48

In *Sacramentum Caritatis*, Pope Benedict XVI counsels care and attention should be given in particular to welcoming migrants from the Eastern Catholic Churches, whose rites and rituals vary from our own:

Contacts between the faithful of different rites can prove a source of mutual enrichment (60)

Eastern Rite Catholic children may have received Communion since their baptism as babies, and are entitled to do so within Roman Catholic Masses, even if their classmates have yet to



The culture of various groups and the capabilities of the children present should be taken into account.

Directory for Masses with Children #30

make their First Holy Communion.

Finally, what migrants expect and hope from fellow Catholics is understanding and respect for their ways of worship and cultural identity. As African migrants put it, 'the Priests and Church leaders may be very kind but do not understand the real needs of migrants'. These migrants think that quick liturgies and brief sermons are not the thing that Africans want. One said that she was shocked that at a funeral of an 89 year-old man the Mass lasted only 25 minutes. She exclaimed: "One has lived 89 – listen 89 years – and he is sent off in less than half an hour. What a scandal."

(Ground of Justice 6.1)

Acting on the Word



The *Directory for Masses with Children* encourages that

All the elements that will help explain the readings should be given great consideration so that the children may make the biblical readings their own and may come more and more to appreciate the value of God's word. 47

There are a variety of ways that the proclamation of the word can be varied and drama introduced to assist understanding. Perhaps first, though, it should be stated that a single voice telling a story well can be a powerful experience. As the Directory suggests it is not the variety of ways that word can be presented which is important but how it enables understanding and participation.

Reading in parts

The simplest way beyond a single voice is to divide the reading up into different parts. As an example we can take the story of the journey to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35) which occurs on the 3rd Sunday of Easter this year. The gospel could be divided up between a narrator, the two disciples and Jesus.

Using different voices can also be, with older children, an effective way of presenting passages of prose such as the letters of St Paul. 2 voices can help clarify the development of an idea.

Mime — Narrated Action

The next stage would be to add some action to the story. The text could be read by either a single voice or in parts.

It is often better to go for simple gesture or movement otherwise the words and actions may compete for attention. Therefore it is good to identify the key elements of the passage. In the story of Emmaus it would be the journey, meeting Jesus and the meal.

Make sure that the readers pace the text so that there is time for the movement.

A letter of St Paul could involve someone at a desk writing and maybe a group to receive the letter.

Tableau

This involves freezing the action at key moments: the beginning and the end but also any significant point in the story. The narration carries over the tableau – make sure whatever posture is held that it can be held easily for a certain amount of time.

Drama

This involves either preparing a script which people have to learn or developing a script through improvisation.

With all these examples have an idea how best to use the space – in the Emmaus story there is a sense of journey, of moving away from Jerusalem, and returning.

Proclamation & Reflection

These various ideas can be used both as a way of proclaiming the scripture within the liturgy and also as a way of reflecting on the text either as part of prayer or outside the liturgy. Through identifying the various roles it is possible to explore the different characters and situations.

These reflections might be through spoken responses, writing or further drama. In the Emmaus story you might ask:

- What were the disciples discussing before Jesus joined them? Why might they be travelling to Emmaus?
- How might the innkeeper reacted to what happened? What would he have told his wife?
- What did the disciples discuss on the way back to Jerusalem?
- How did the Eleven react? What questions did they ask?

see website for ideas about resources



Liturgical Calendar 2008–9

2008

- 3 Oct Cafod Harvest fast day
- 2 Nov All Saints (transferred from Saturday 1)
- 3 Nov All Souls (transferred from Sunday)
- 23 Nov Christ the King (Youth Sunday)
- 30 Nov 1st Sunday of Advent

2009

- 4 Jan Epiphany
- 8 Feb Education Sunday
- 25 Feb Ash Wednesday
- 6 Mar CAFOD Lent fast day
- 12 Apr Easter Sunday
- 31 May Pentecost
- 28 June St Peter & St Paul (transferred from Monday)

Full details on the Liturgical Calendar for 2009 together with a summary of dates for 2010 can be found on the Liturgy Office website [www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Calendar]

Holydays of Obligation

The decision of the bishops to transfer three holydays to Sundays (Epiphany, Ascension and Body and Blood of the Lord) together with the longstanding decision that Holydays which fall on Saturday or Monday are transferred to the Sunday means that next year, with the exception of Christmas Day, there will be no days of obligation which fall on a weekday.

A special *Spirit of the Season* guide was produced to accompany the most recent change which can still be downloaded from the website.

The challenge for schools is how to mark the key days of the liturgical year whether they fall within the week or on a Sunday and how they can shape the prayer for the week. Over the Summer term there are a string of celebrations: first a sequence of four Sundays – Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity, Body and Blood of the Lord – then, at the end of June two further Solemnities – the Birth of St John the Baptist, St Peter and St Paul. This year with an early date for Easter and the Body and Blood of the Lord on 25 May there is a gap of almost a month between the two groups but in other years they can run into one another. So that the term has a sense of shape and to avoid ‘Solemnity fatigue’ it is wise to plan the liturgy and prayer in blocks.

5 Directory for Masses with Children ~ A guide

Masses with Children in which only a few Adults also participate (20–54)

- *The third chapter is the longest section of the Directory. It is being covered over the four issues*

Introductory Rites

One element (e.g. the greeting) plus the opening prayer are required (40); others are optional, but the elements omitted should vary.

Liturgy of the Word

Scripture is obligatory (41); the gospel is always included (45).

- Criterion for the decision: the spiritual value of the text for the children (44):
- the number of readings may be reduced (42),
- other texts may be chosen, in keeping with the feast or season (43),
- the text may be edited (43): simplification is often necessary, but paraphrases should be avoided (45),
- an introduction to the reading is important (47),
- the reading may be read in parts. (47)

A psalm, or psalm-type hymn, or gospel acclamation (Alleluia), or silence should be used. Where there is only one reading the singing may follow the homily. (46)

Importance of the homily (48) and of involving the children in it (22): it may be given by one of the adults (24).

The Apostles’ Creed may be used especially because it is part of children’s catechetical formation. (49)

Leading people in prayer

Communication is a key part of liturgy preparation. Not only preparing the liturgy but making sure that the key people know what has been prepared. The person who presides at the liturgy, for example, the priest at Mass, needs to know what has been prepared, as part of the role of presider is to hold the whole liturgy together.

Ideally the priest should be part of the liturgy preparation. However, one of the increasingly difficult tasks with liturgy is to bring together the presider with the relevant members of the school community for planning and preparation. Often liturgy will be planned in school and then communicated with the presider.

Where the priest is a regular presider at the school liturgies it would be a good idea, where it is not possible for him to be part of the preparation, to arrange to have a conversation about school liturgies. Apart from the opportunity to identify some common expectations and ways of working the conversation can also build up mutual trust. If possible, after the first liturgy, it would be good to have some sort of evaluative conversation respecting the skills that both bring to the discussion. It may be useful to look over the *Directory for Masses with Children* together so that there is a shared understanding of various points.

The following are some guidelines which might aid this process.

- **Practicalities** – date, time, length of time available, venue, number of participants, age range of pupils, what to bring (liturgical books, vessels, vestments etc)
- **Relevant information about school** – for example, if there is a particular focus to the liturgy such as those leaving, what pupils have been studying, if they are preparing for exams, if there has been a bereavement in the year group etc



- **Relevant information about the Celebration** – what is being celebrated and also some of the ideas from the preparation.
- **Readings** – what has been chosen and why, particularly if readings are omitted
- **Music** – what is to be sung, Mass parts, acclamations, Responsorial Psalm, Gloria, hymns... Is there anything you expect the Presider to sing: doxology to the Eucharistic Prayer etc.
- **Ministries** – names of those who are to perform particular ministries in the liturgy
- **Holy Communion** - whether there is to be Communion under both kinds, how many Eucharistic Ministers there are and where they will be positioned.
- **Changes** - whether anything in the liturgy is to be omitted or altered, e.g. renewal of baptismal promises instead of the Creed
- **Additions** - whether anything has been added, e.g. drama, reflections, symbolic action
- **Particular traditions** - for example joining hands at a certain point
- **Script** – if a text has been prepared the presider should be sent it in advance. Don't be surprised if he wishes to change something. As the presider he has a responsibility for making the liturgy work.

Getting in touch

Martin Foster, Liturgy Office,
39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1PL.
020 7901 4851 (tel) 020 7901 4821 (fax)
Martin.Foster@cbcew.org.uk
www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/SOS

The views expressed in *Spirit of the Season* are not necessarily those of the Bishops' Conference.

Spirit of the Season may be copied and distributed freely in whole or in part. Permission for any other use contact the Liturgy Office.

To get an email when the next issue is available see the website.

© 2008 Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales ISSN 1748-5088