

# Spirit of the Season

# Summer 2008

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

## Singing the World

This is not about 'adding to' the Mass, but rather ensuring that as we sing the Mass, we include all those present, offering them a way into the mystery through something which is appealing and accessible, not completely alien. Various collections include sung Mass parts from around the world: settings of the Kyrie from Pakistan and India can be found in John L. Bell's collection, *Love and Anger*, and *World Praise* respectively. *Cantate* offers Gospel Acclamations from Zimbabwe, South Africa, Palestine, Honduras, France, USA, England, and Ireland. *If you believe and I believe* is a song from Zimbabwe, possibly a locally distorted version of an English folk song carried to Africa with missionaries many years ago. It was returned to the UK where it can now be adapted as an apposite petition for Zimbabwe, as that country continues to suffer.

Many eminent church musicians have travelled the world in order to collect and record songs, including Maggie Hamilton, Geoff Weaver, and John

L. Bell. These have been collected together in specifically international hymnals such as *World Praise*, *Many and Great* and *Sent by the Lord*. Standard hymnals and supplements also contain songs from beyond British shores, whose foreign origins may surprise you. The English church music repertoire was refreshed during the 19th century by translations of German hymns, including *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty; Now thank we all our God; Good Christians, all rejoice*. We sing English lyrics to tunes from around the world. The melody of the French carol, *Noel Nouvelet*, is used for *Now the green blade riseth*, and *Jesus Christ is waiting*. From Poland we get the tune for *He is risen, tell the story* and *Infant holy*. The hymnal *Laudate* includes music from Malawi (*Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love*, collected by pioneering world musician and missionary Tom Colvin), Argentina (*Santo, santo*), Nicaragua (*Sent by the Lord*) and Korea (*Look and learn from the birds*). The popular song *Brother, sister, let me serve you* (also known as



*Learning to sing another culture's music is not only a musical venture but also a way to enter their image... of the paschal mystery itself.*

Milwaukee Symposia 63

*Will you let me be your servant*) comes from New Zealand. International religious communities, such as Taizé, based in France, build up a repertoire of music accessible to people from all over the world, as the same short texts can be sung in many languages. Their chants include: *Stay with me, remain here with me; Jesus, remember me; Bless the Lord, my soul; Ubi caritas...*

Consider creating a local 'collection' of world songs, from Diocesan ethnic chaplaincies, or closer to home, by running a song sharing session, to which parishioners, families, school staff and parents bring

# Opening the Word



In *Sacramentum Caritatis* Pope Benedict says something surprising:

Given the importance of the word of God, the quality of the homily needs to be improved. (46)

He goes on to ask that ministers

Preach in such a way that the homily closely relates to the word of God in the sacramental celebration and the life of the community, so that the word of God truly becomes the Church's vital nourishment and support. (46)

This request based on documents such as the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* points to the two pillars of the homily: it is primarily based on scriptures that have just been proclaimed in the liturgy and it relates those texts to the lives of the people present. These two pillars should be true whether the celebration is on a Sunday morning in the parish or with a class of Year 5. The task of the preacher is to open up the scriptures, to draw our attention to the messages and connections, maybe to use the readings to illustrate some catechesis and then to explore what these texts mean today for this group of people.

The Bishops' document *Celebrating the Mass* recommends that:

If it is to fulfil its purpose, the Homily must be the fruit of meditation, carefully prepared, and in length, style and content sensitively adapted to the needs and capacities of all present. This may well be more easily achieved if the priest prepares the Homily in shared reflection and prayer with members or representatives of the congregation. (169)

There are plenty of criteria in the above to help evaluate the homily afterwards but this last quotation also suggests a method of preparation. Such a method is not intended to be a shared writing group rather it is intended to provide a space where the needs of the community in the light of the scripture can be explored.

In Masses with children in which only a few adults participate the Homily may be given by one of the

favourite songs from their home countries and these are recorded for wider use. Such a World Song Project has been run successfully by the Camden Music Service in north London, and in preparation for last year's Mass for Migrants at Westminster Cathedral, liturgical songs were 'collected' from the ethnic chaplaincies of the Philippines, Croatia, the Lebanon (Maronite Church), Zimbabwe and China.

adults (e.g. a teacher) where the priest is not used to speaking with children (DMC 24). Where that is the case it may be appropriate to explore with the children beforehand the readings as a way of preparing the homily. In any preparation the two key questions will be:

- What does the text(s) say to me?
- What does the text(s) say to us?

It is important that first of all the homilist finds meaning in the texts for him/herself. This may be by first identifying the word or phrase that resonates (maybe using the method of *lectio divina* – see SoS Autumn 07). From these words or phrases it is possible to explore the texts. Both individually or with a group the reflection on the personal response needs to moved to wider concerns – what in these texts connect with what is going on in this community or group. This reflection may also provide material for the Prayers of the Faithful.

There is a difference between reflection in preparation and preaching the homily. One way in is to recount the story of Gospel maybe either clarifying points or highlighting aspects of the text. It may be appropriate to offer a personal response. Both the recounting of the text and the personal response may, with children, be done through dialogue. Another method would be through drama or other medium but care should be taken that whatever is done does not deflect from the Gospel itself.

Whatever method is used it is important to recognise beforehand the one or two points that need to be conveyed. If part of the purpose of the homily is to nourish people then the communication of a couple of simple ideas or phrases that can be reflected over the coming week should be enough.

In a city school, it is likely that the children and staff come from families of a wide variety of cultures. This great richness, when shared with respect, curiosity and understanding can be brought to the full in liturgy. Not only can the languages and art of many countries be present, but songs and instrumental music too. Children are very responsive to music sounds from cultures other than their own... Ask the children to teach you songs from their home culture perhaps ones that are sung in other church traditions. Spiritual Garments, p.57

## The Letter & the Spirit

In this column over the last year there have been a series of questions for reflection to help prepare the liturgy. The questions have not been focused on specific aspects of a particular liturgy. They have been based more on the spirit of the season and the liturgy. To grasp the spirit or to put it in a more complex way, to enter the mystery gives us resources to build the liturgy for others. As way of rounding off the year and to provide a form of evaluation questions from the previous year will be recalled. If you have taken the opportunity in the year to reflect on the questions by yourself or as a group it may be interesting to consider how, and why, you might answer them differently.

- What has been a good experience of liturgy in the last year? Why?
- What do you give thanks for? Which hopes have been realised? What will you carry onto next year?
- Where have you experienced Christ's presence in the last year? Both in the liturgy and in your daily work?
- What change or development have you seen in the last year? For yourself and your community?
- What do you wish to change or let go of in the celebration of the liturgy?
- Where has there been new life?
- What ideas or seeds will you take forward to next year?



## 6 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 four issues.*

#### Liturgy of Eucharist

The Eucharist Prayer is the high point of the entire celebration. The children take part by listening and singing the acclamations. (52)

Before the preface dialogue, to encourage participation, it can be helpful to name reasons for giving thanks. (22)

#### Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer, fraction, and invitation to communion are obligatory (53): 'Deliver us, Lord', 'Lord Jesus Christ' may be omitted.

The distribution of Communion should be worthy to help children to take part in the eucharistic mystery. There should be singing during the communion procession. (54)

Communion in both kinds: the cup should not be refused simply because of age. (cf. 22)

Silent reflection is important (37).

Before the blessing, the priest should say a few words to help link the liturgy with the life of faith and with Christian witness (54).

## Questions for Reflection

- What criteria do you use when you make adaptations according to the Directory?
- How do you balance the need for a familiar structure and to vary the adaptations that are made?
- Are there times when prayer would be an alternative to the celebration of Mass? (27)

# Ministers and Ministries

Enabling full, active and conscious participation in the liturgy is a key role of any liturgical minister. A reader does not just read the text but proclaims it in such a way so that something is communicated to those who listen. The presider does not just say the prayers but invites all, through his tone and gestures, to join in his prayer.

Being a member of the liturgical assembly is the primary ministry of all present. Sometimes the challenge is to help people appreciate their role and involvement through singing, joining in responses, gesture and movement etc.

Full and active participation in the liturgy does not mean that everyone needs to have a specific ministry. There is no need to find a 'job' for everyone in the class to do or to invent ways for people to feel involved. However care should be taken to avoid the duplication of ministries as no person should exercise more than one ministry during a liturgy.

Whoever is invited to do a particular ministry, whether a child or adult, should have the opportunity to prepare for the liturgy. Ideally thought should be given as to how formation might be offered for the various ministries.

At a basic level ministries need to be performed in an appropriate manner, which requires an understanding of what is involved - being properly informed as to what to do and when to do it, being aware of any special gestures (e.g. how to approach the lectern if reading), why the ministry is important within the liturgy, where they minister from etc.

Some roles that can be included are:

- **Presider** – the person who leads the liturgy, who invites people to pray and recites the prayers. They may have the role of introducing the liturgy and/or giving a reflection after the readings; the Directory for Masses with Children allows for

both these roles to be taken by a person other than a priest, where appropriate, at Mass.

- **Deacon** – where there is a Deacon they have a particular role in the liturgy: to proclaim the Gospel and to give invitations and instructions, they may also preach and announce the intentions in the Prayer of the Faithful.
- **Reader** – the person(s) who proclaims the Word of God. Where there is more than one non-Gospel reading it is good to use different readers
- **Intercessor** – the person(s) who leads the Prayers of the Faithful
- **Cantor** – the person who leads the singing, in particular the verses of the psalm or other verses.
- **Animator** – the person who directs and encourages the song of the congregation – where the music is familiar this may not be necessary.
- **Musicians** – those who sing and play instruments to assist the congregation's full participation in singing the acclamations, responses and songs.
- **Altar Servers** – those who are involved in processions and ensuring the priest has everything he needs at the appropriate moment.
- **Procession with gifts** – those who bring forward the gifts of bread and wine.
- **Eucharistic Minister** – where necessary, the person(s) who assists in the distribution of Holy Communion
- **Preparing space** (Sacristan) – those who prepare the altar and who ensure the space is fit for worship in a way that complements the liturgy
- **Ushers** – to provide direction during times when the congregation move to make these times more respectful and dignified. They may also welcome people to the liturgical space beforehand.



#### Getting in touch

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