

Spirit of the Season

Lent 2009

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

Celebrating the Word

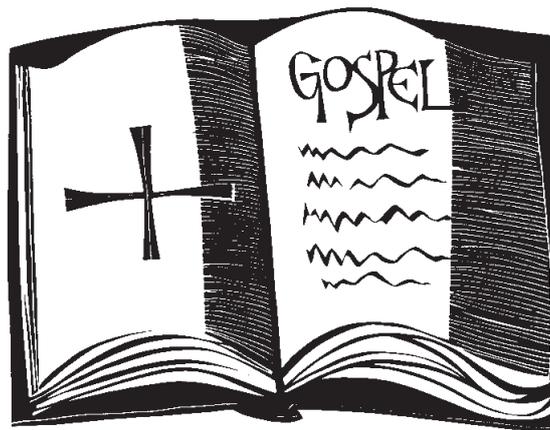
In October 2008 the Synod of Bishops met in Rome. This is a meeting of bishops from around the world which takes place every 2-3 years and talks about a theme central to the life of the Church. This time they reflected on *The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church*.

At the end of the meeting the bishops draw a series of propositions from matters which have arisen from their discussions and present these to the Pope. In due time the Holy Father writes an Apostolic Exhortation which is based on these ideas and addressed to the whole Church.

This is the second Synod under Pope Benedict and both times he has allowed the propositions to be made public so that we can see the bare bones of his future document.

One aspect of the Word that the Bishops highlighted was the importance of liturgical Celebrations of the Word of God:

The celebration of the Word is one of the privileged places of encounter with the Lord, because in this proclamation, Christ makes himself present and continues to speak to his people (cf. SC 7).



Even in the midst of today's noise, which makes effective listening very difficult, the faithful are encouraged to cultivate a disposition of interior silence and of listening to the Word of God that transforms life. *Proposition 18*

Though recommended in the Second Vatican Council this is an area perhaps where schools can show the way to parishes. A time of prayer centred on the reading of scripture whether it is classroom prayer or an assembly is a familiar

experience in many schools including the use of the Sunday Gospel.

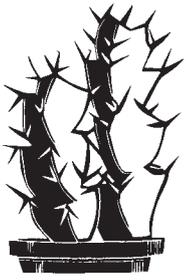
Reception of the Word, the prayer of praise, thanksgiving and petition, which make up the celebration of the Word of God, are manifestations of the Spirit in the heart of the faithful and in the Christian assembly, gathered round the Word of God. The Holy Spirit, in fact, makes the proclaimed and celebrated Word of God fruitful in the heart and life of those who receive it.

The Synod bishops also encouraged that attention be given to various aspects of celebrating the word.

- The book of the scriptures has an honoured place.
- Silence following the readings is encouraged.
- The Scriptures are always read from worthy liturgical books.
- Those who read should be adequately formed.
- Consideration should be given to how best those with sight or hearing impairment receive the word.

Proposition 14

Classroom Prayer and Assemblies



In this edition, we explore the way in which students might be encouraged to respond to scripture and reflection in a time of worship, whether it be an assembly or classroom prayer.

Respond

Students may be invited to respond in a variety of ways, in prayer, reflection or action. Some suggestions are:-

- Invite students to pray for a moment in silence before leading a prayer e.g. Let's take a moment to reflect on what God is asking of us today, asking him for the strength we need to follow Jesus..... (Pause for 30 seconds)....Prayer read aloud.
- If using a traditional prayer, e.g. the Our Father, ask students to reflect first on what they want to pray for then say it together. Ensure that it is not rushed but said collectively at a normal pace, to allow students time to think about the words, e.g. Let's take a moment to reflect on what God is asking of us today, asking him for the strength we need to follow Jesus..... (Pause for 30 seconds).... We pray together: Our Father...
- Put a simple prayer relating to the theme in a powerpoint that all students can say together.
- Announce 3 or 4 short prayer intentions, some of which might be related to the theme, each ending with a period of silence to allow people to pray, then ending 'Lord, in your mercy', to which all respond, 'Hear our prayer'.
- Use a ritual action, such as one of those listed in each edition of *Spirit of the Season* this year.

Liturgical Colours and Environment

The period of Lent is marked by the use of Violet vestments and begins on Ash Wednesday, ending on the evening of Maundy Thursday. The colour rose is used for the 4th Sunday, known as 'Laetare Sunday'. A different shade might be used to make the Lenten colour distinctive from the violet of Advent.

- Desert images
- Reconciliation theme
- Key words, e.g. forgiveness, fasting, prayer, almsgiving
- CAFOD images

10 Ideas for Ritual Actions

During this year, we will be giving ideas for ritual action that might be associated with different themes. All can be adapted as appropriate to other themes and to the age range and number of students present.

- Bury the word 'alleluia'
- Pour water over hands
- Dip hands in a bowl of water and make the sign of the cross
- Write sins on paper then burn them
- Place stones at the foot of the cross
- Write sins on paper in water-based pens then submerge paper in water, watching the ink disappear
- Write sins on paper then shred them
- Share the sign of peace
- Untie knots in pieces of string for letting go of memories
- Take bricks away which have been covering a picture



The faithful should be taught to place the Cross in its essential reference to the Resurrection of Christ: the Cross, the empty tomb, the Death and Resurrection of Christ are indispensable in the Gospel narrative of God's salvific plan. In the Christian faith, the Cross is an expression of the triumph of Christ over the powers of darkness. Hence, it is adorned with precious stones and is a sign of blessing when made upon one's self, or on others or on objects.

Directory on Popular Piety

THE YEAR OF ST PAUL

The passage from St Paul that we hear at Mass on Ash Wednesday comes from the second letter to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2) and begins 'We are ambassadors for Christ.' This might be our slogan and our resolve during Lent, to be Christ's ambassadors to all around us.

Websters Dictionary defines 'Ambassador' as:

1. an official envoy ; especially : a diplomatic agent of the highest rank accredited to a foreign government or sovereign as the resident representative of his or her own government or sovereign or appointed for a special and often temporary diplomatic assignment
2. a: an authorised representative or messenger
b: an unofficial representative <travelling abroad as ambassadors of goodwill>

During Lent we commit ourselves to prayer, to fasting and to almsgiving. Many will make a commitment during Lent to change and grow in some way, to perhaps make some sacrifice to help others. We are familiar with the many ways we try to do this but during this Lent perhaps we could focus on the fact that we do this as Ambassadors for Jesus. We have been chosen by God for this special assignment, to represent Jesus and speak his words, to act



like he does, just as an ambassador would do for a government. The children may be aware of celebrities who often commit themselves as ambassadors for particular charities, visiting areas of need in the world.

This theme could lead to consideration of the expectations we have of people representing a particular cause, government, institution, faith, even a football team. How should we present ourselves to those who see us? What kind of responsibilities do we take on? And how much more significant is the image we present when we represent Jesus?

How are ambassadors recognised? Do they wear a particular kind of dress, a badge or insignia? Or is it something about the way they behave? What could we do to ensure that we are recognised as ambassadors for Christ?

During this time of Lent let's celebrate the year of St Paul by living out Paul's words to the people of Corinth, so that when we come to the momentous days of Holy Week and Easter we have made ourselves ready to celebrate the greatest feast of the Church's year.

Music for Processions in Lent and Holy Week:

	Composer:	Source:	Notes:
Lent:			
<i>Jesus, remember me</i>	Jacques Berthier	Laudate (Ld)	
<i>Were you there</i>		Ld/Hymns Old & New/CfE	<i>Traditional Spiritual</i>
<i>You, Israel, return now</i>	Tom Colvin	Celebration for Everyone (CfE)	<i>Based on a Tumbuka hymn</i>
Stations of the Cross:			
<i>Behold the Lamb of God</i>	John L. Bell	Ld/CfE	
<i>We adore you, O Christ</i>	Martin Foster	Cantate	
<i>Jesus has given his life for us</i>	Christopher Walker	Music for the Mass	
<i>Wonder and stare</i>	John L. Bell	Come, all you people	
Palm Sunday:			
<i>Palm Procession</i>	Christopher Walker	Ld	<i>Easter version available in Resurrexit</i>
<i>Hosanna, hosanna</i>	Carl Tuttle	Complete Mission Praise	
<i>Make way</i>	Graham Kendrick	Ld/CfE	
<i>Give me joy in my heart</i>		Ld/CfE/HON	<i>Versions are available with verses more specific to Palm Sunday</i>

Saints of the Season

Following Jesus

Saints in Lent

When the Calendar of Saints was revised following the Second Vatican Council account was taken of the liturgical seasons. When you look at the Calendar for the months of March, and also December, when the Church primarily celebrates Lent and Advent respectively you will see that there are fewer Saint's days and more days when there is no commemoration at all.

Even when the Saints are celebrated in Lent unless they are a Solemnity (St Joseph and the Annunciation, St David in Wales) or a Feast (St David or St Patrick) they are marked with reduced celebration – only the Opening Prayer at Mass is used. This is because in Lent the Church is focussed on the journey to Easter. Even when a Solemnity (the highest rank of celebration) falls on a Sunday – the Sunday of Lent takes precedence. So in Wales this year St David will be celebrated on Monday 2 March.

March

1 St David

Very little is known about the life of David (Dewi Sant). He belonged to that great monastic movement which became influential in Wales in the sixth century and which had links with monasticism in Gaul and in Ireland. The earliest references to David are in Irish Annals. Many churches across South Wales claim David as their founder. His chief foundation was at Mynyw or Menevia in Dyfed. He was canonised by Pope Callistus II in 1123.

17 St Patrick

Born in Roman Britain around the end of the 4th century, Patrick died in Ireland about the middle of the 5th century. As a missionary bishop, he faced hardship and opposition even from his friends and fellow Christians. Yet he worked to conciliate, to evangelise, and to educate local chieftains and their families. Patrick is remembered for his simplicity and pastoral care, for his humble trust in God, and for his fearless preaching of the gospel to those who had enslaved him in his youth.

18 St Cyril of Jerusalem

Cyril was bishop for over thirty-five years in Jerusalem, where he was born about 315 and where he died in 386. He was deeply involved in debates with the Arians over the divinity of Christ and was exiled three times. He is remembered especially for the illuminating baptismal catechesis he gave in the new Constantinian basilica of the Holy Sepulchre.

19 St Joseph

A carpenter, though born of the royal house of David, Joseph was an upright man who, as husband of the Virgin Mary, cared for Mary and the child Jesus. He was venerated in the East after the fourth century, and his cult flowered in the West during the fifteenth century, following the development of medieval nativity plays, the Christmas crib, and increased devotion to Mary.

25 The Annunciation of the Lord

This feast originated in the East during the sixth century and gained universal observance in the West during the eighth century. It is a feast of the Lord, commemorating the announcement to the Virgin Mary of the Word made flesh, Mary's acceptance of God's will, and the conception of Christ nine months before Christmas. Its occurrence close to Easter links the incarnation with the whole mystery of human redemption in Christ.

In the **Way of the Cross**, we join Jesus on his final journey from Gethsamene to Calvary. At points on this journey, Biblical accounts remind us that Jesus paused repeatedly to regain his strength and to reassure those whom he met. This provides a Biblical model for our processions, which are not walks nor rambles, but representations of the faith journey incorporating both reflection and pilgrimage. It is common practice to walk the Stations of the Cross on Fridays during Lent. Biblical texts take precedence, usefully accompanied by religious poetry, prayers, hymns and silence. Each class could process around the hall or school chapel in quiet reflection on pictures of the Stations. Or they might be acted out in the playground or church grounds. Such processions might conclude with **Veneration of the Cross**, in preparation for the liturgical procession of the cross on Good Friday.

Popular carnivals originally derived from religious processions take place on Shrove Tuesday around the world. In school on this day, collect up letters of the word Alleluia and carry them with loud sung Alleluias accompanied by instruments to a cupboard where they may be hidden for the coming penitential season. The children return to their places or classrooms in silence, appreciating the significant change in liturgical season.

On the Monday after **Palm Sunday**, children could process with branches from church to decorate the school, recalling the triumphant entry into Jerusalem which prefigures Christ's ultimate triumph over death and sin. The Easter Vigil, too, begins outside the church and worshippers process in carrying candles to light from the new Paschal Candle. Could the parish Paschal Candle be processed to school from church at some point during the octave of Easter, sharing Christ's resurrection light with the children of the parish at school?

- for Music ideas see page 3

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