

# Spirit of the Season

## Winter 2009

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

### At the name of Jesus

One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is awe and wonder. It is not easy to explain to children and young people how this gift is realised, not least because of the over-used word 'awesome'. These days, everything from a visit to Disneyworld, to an iPod, to simply a gift of your favourite chocolate can be said to be 'awesome'.

To understand the depth of 'awe and wonder' in God's presence requires more than 'quiet time; or just being silent. We all need a focus whatever our age. It is possible to be awe-struck in God's presence in moments of vocal praise as well as contemplative silence. Perhaps the challenge is to make provision for both at the appropriate times – awe and wonder cannot be provided on tap but the opportunities for discovering them can be.

Some of the acts of reverence that we make on the celebration of Mass are very visible: genuflecting, bowing, the priest and deacon kissing the Altar or the Book of the Gospels. We

should never take for granted in times of catechesis, however, that these visible gestures are always understood. We can be inspired – or puzzled – by the greater occurrence of kissing sacred objects, as an act of rev-



erence, in the Eastern Christian Churches and also found in the piety of many ethnic groups.

The gestures of liturgy and prayer have to be learnt and understood so that they are a genuine response, so that they become habitual and habit-forming. Not so that children grow up with 'holy tics' but that faith becomes incarnate. The

challenge for those who teach is that such things must first be made flesh in their own lives.

One of the gestures of reverence that is perhaps not taught so often today but which can be restored for good reason is bowing one's head at the name of Jesus. Gestures – when used for the praise of God – can remind us of the truths of our faith. Countless holy people throughout history, in the Bible and beyond, have spoken about the power of the name of God's Son, the good reason to bow down in reverence when considering the saving power of Christ. In the tradition of the Church the head is bowed whenever the Holy Trinity are named together, for example, in a doxology, and at the names of Jesus, or the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In days where the word 'Jesus' is uttered much more frequently as a curse than a blessing, the simple act of bowing our heads at the name of Jesus – in our prayers – can restore the Saviour's name to its rightful use.

# Classroom Prayer and Assemblies

*In this edition, we explore what might be used in the way of scripture and reflection for a time of worship, whether it be an assembly or classroom prayer.*

## Listen

A good place to begin when considering the choice of text is the reading of the day. This will be found in the Weekday Missal, or can be accessed via a website, such as <http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Calendar/index.shtml>

An alternative would be to use the Gospel reading of Sunday, or the first or second reading, if appropriate.

Consideration should be given to how the reading will be proclaimed. Any reading from scripture should preferably be read directly from a Bible. It should be rehearsed beforehand to ensure the reader can be heard and can pronounce words correctly.

## Reflect

Students might also be invited to reflect on a theme from the reading, relating it to their own experience or to the world in a variety of ways.

- Reflect in silence
- Listen to a piece of music, with or without words
- Use a newspaper article or story from the news
- Use an idea from a TV programme, film or book
- Use images or props to help illustrate
- Use a story (either fact or fiction) from your own experience or from others'
- Speak from personal experience
- Use a Powerpoint reflection with words and images and perhaps music
- Show a clip from a DVD

## The Name of God

The Vatican has issued a directive about the use of the Hebrew Name of God in liturgies. The names 'Yahweh' or 'Jehovah' should not be used in liturgies, times of prayer or collective acts of worship. This affects the use in songs and hymns. Publishers have been informed of the directive and asked to provide alternative texts where possible. Care should be taken when readings are taken directly from the *Jerusalem Bible*.

The text of the Directive and the Statement from Bishop Roche can be found on the Liturgy Office website – <http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Documents/Name.shtml>

- Use polls, research or statistics
- Use a historical event, e.g. Holocaust Memorial Day
- Use Church teaching, e.g. the Catechism, an encyclical or Cherishing Life
- Use the life and example of a Saint if it is a feast day

## Liturgical Colours and Environment

Red is used on three occasions during the liturgical year:- Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Pentecost Sunday. It is traditionally associated with the triumph of Palm Sunday, the suffering of Good Friday and the fire of Pentecost.

Ongoing celebration of the Birth of the Lord

- Feast of the Epiphany
- Feast of the Baptism of the Lord
- Feast of the Presentation - 2nd February

## 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.

- Empty all possessions into a basket to contemplate simplicity
- Create a focal point together as part of a liturgy
- Highlight words of a piece of scripture
- Write a commitment or promise on a card
- Draw or write in sand
- Write a letter to yourself
- Write a prayer in response to what has been heard
- Create a collective image of issues/people/ places to be prayed for
- Find letters of a significant thematic word hidden around the worship space
- Take away challenges on slips of paper to carry out, e.g. New Year's resolutions

# THE YEAR OF ST PAUL

During this half term the Church celebrates the **Conversion of St Paul** on 25 January. This year it falls on a Sunday and you may hear the readings for this feast instead of the Sunday readings. This would happen only this year as we celebrate the Jubilee. Normally the Conversion of St Paul would not supersede the normal Sunday.

The feast offers an opportunity to look again at the life of St Paul. The First Reading from the Mass of the day is Paul's own description of his life up to the moment of his conversion and of his conversion itself. (Acts 22:3-16) The Gospel is Mark's description of the commission given by Jesus to the Apostles; 'Go out into the whole world; proclaim the Good news to all creation...' (Mark 16:15-18)

The narrative nature of the First Reading perhaps offers opportunities for role play or drama, familiarising children with the dramatic nature of Paul's conversion. It is interesting to note that, although many visual representations of Paul's conversion show him falling from a horse, there is no reference to a horse in the scripture!



We might pick out one or two other themes to reflect on from this passage, in classroom prayer or an assembly.

Paul tells us that Ananias says to him,

The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and 'You are to be his witness before all mankind.' (Acts 22:14-15)

We could look at the idea of being 'chosen' by God – a chance to reflect on the specialness of each one of us and our responsibility to live our lives as children of God; or at what it means to be a **witness** – to reveal to others the truth. Both of these themes suggest that being a follower of Jesus demands certain actions from us, that our faith needs to be active rather than passive. Returning to the beginning of the passage from Acts we can see that the followers of Jesus in those early days suffered – and even died – because of their faith. Paul's experience on the road to Damascus led him to help others to know Jesus, and in his letters to encourage them in their struggles so that they could pass the faith to others.

## Music for the Gospel procession and Procession with Gifts:

The Gospel is acclaimed with a sung Alleluia. During Lent, this is replaced by a phrase of praise such as *Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory*. It can be more appropriate to accompany the Presentation of the Gifts with silence, instrumental or choral music than a congregational song.

	Composer:	Source:	Notes:
<b>Gospel Acclamation:</b>			
<i>Listen now for the Gospel</i>	trans. John L. Bell	Cantate	From Zimbabwe. Verses suitable for Pentecost
<i>Alleluia</i>	Norah Duncan IV	There is one among us	Easy harmonies. From USA
<i>Hallelujah</i>	Abraham Maraire	Cantate	Easy harmonies. From Zimbabwe
<i>Alleluia, your words, O Lord, are spirit and life</i>	Bernadette Farrell	Cantate	Verses for Advent, Christmas and Easter
<i>O fili et filiae</i>	Jean Tisserant adpt. Marty Haugen	Cantate	Various settings for Eastertide
<i>This is a great day</i>	Bill Tamblyn		From the Jubilee Mass setting
<b>Music at the Presentation of the Gifts:</b>			
<i>Take, O take me as I am</i>	John L. Bell	Come all you people	
<i>Open our eyes to see</i>	Angela Reith	Cantate	
<i>Blest are you who made the universe</i>	Marty Haugen	Laudate	
<i>Bénissez le Seigneur</i>	Jacques Berthier	Laudate	Taizé. Means Bless the Lord

# Saints of the Season

## January

### 12 St Aelred of Rievaulx

Born in 1110, Aelred died at Rievaulx (Yorkshire) on this day in 1167. The son of a priest, he was educated at Durham and in the household of King David of Scotland. In 1134 he visited the newly-founded Cistercian abbey of Rievaulx, and was so attracted to the place and its life that he chose to become a monk there, and was eventually elected abbot. He is remembered for his gift for friendship, for his sensitive and gentle rule, and for his enduringly popular spiritual writings, especially that on friendship.

AELRED



### 27 St Angela Merici

Born in Desenzano (Italy) about 1474, Angela died in Brescia on this day in 1540. She became a Franciscan tertiary and subsequently founded the Company of Saint Ursula (Ursulines). Her vision provided an alternative to the forms of religious life then available for women: members remained in their own homes, living as virgins and observing a rule she composed. Angela is remembered as a woman of prayer, for her evangelical way of life, for her pilgrimages, and for her creative response to the needs of women in the Church.

### 31 St John Bosco

Born in Piedmont (Italy) in 1815, John died at Turin on this day in 1888. He grew up in extreme poverty and, after ordination to the priesthood, devoted his whole life to educating young people, especially the poor. For this he founded the Salesians, men and women who continue this work with youth throughout the world. Like the order's patron, Saint Francis de Sales (24 January), John is remembered for his cheerfulness and total trust in the providence of God.

## February

### 2 The Presentation of the Lord

This feast originated in Jerusalem before the fifth century and was adopted at Rome during the seventh century. It is celebrated forty days after Christmas to commemorate the prescribed Mosaic ritual following the birth of a child. The feast recalls the encounter of Jesus with Simeon and Anna in the temple—the Lord meets his people. It celebrates Christ as “the light to enlighten all nations,” and so candles are blessed during the introductory rites and carried in the entrance procession.

### 11 Our Lady of Lourdes

Observed since 1907, this memorial celebrates the immaculate Virgin Mary as honoured in Lourdes (France). This site of apparitions to the young Bernadette Soubirous in 1858 has become a focus of devotion to Mary. It is a place of prayer and pilgrimage, of conversion and healing for Christians from every land.

### 14 Sts Cyril & Methodius

Cyril and Methodius were brothers from Thessalonica (Greece). Cyril was born about 826 and died at Rome in 869; Methodius was born about 815 and died in Velehrad (Czech Republic) in 885. With papal approval they preached the gospel in Moravia using their own translations of the Scriptures and the liturgy in the local language. These translations into Slavonic were based on an alphabet they invented, now called Cyrillic. The success of their preaching aroused jealous Frankish opposition. Cyril and Methodius are honoured as apostles of the Slavic peoples. Together they are remembered for their contribution to Slavic culture, for their missionary inculturation of the faith, and for establishing links between East and West. Since 1980 they have been recognised alongside Saint Benedict (11 July) as patrons of Europe.

# Moving to his presence

Processions are liturgy ‘incarnate’. Our whole body is engaged. They are linked to liturgical **gestures** such as the sign of the Cross, and liturgical **posture**, as we sit, kneel and stand to reflect our attitude of prayer, praise and reflection.

We make a real fuss of the **Gospel** in Mass. We rise to our feet and raise our voices in song to acclaim it. The Book of the Gospels is processed across the sanctuary accompanied by incense and candles. We can further highlight its importance for everyone by developing more elaborate and exciting Gospel processions, such that even those who cannot understand the words may realise the presence of the Word in this rite, done well. Gospel processions evolve with the liturgical seasons and therefore in Christmastide, the pace of the procession and the sound which accompanies it may rightly look and feel very different than in Lent.

The **Presentation of the Gifts** is a time of transition in the Mass, a move from focus on the Word to the Eucharist. Nothing which will return to ordinary use after the Mass should be presented as this is better brought forward as part of the Entrance Procession. Gifts of money and items for the poor may be presented, as these will be transformed to benefit the wider parish community. Encourage the children to notice what happens on the sanctuary - how the altar is prepared and what happens to the gifts after they are presented.

Consider the **space** available for your Mass and how it can be explored creatively in liturgical processions. Ensure that processions are a colourful visual focus, and inclusive of the whole congregation rather than performances by a select few. As at every point in the Mass, presiders and liturgical ministers model the attitude of prayer and behaviour which best enables participants to enter into the liturgical moment. So ensure your priest is aware of what's planned!

- for Music ideas see page 3

#### 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