

New Members of the Church

Background

The Easter Vigil is the usual time to celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) with Adults. The Easter Season is therefore the time for post-baptismal catechesis or ‘mystagogy’ with the newly baptised or ‘neophytes’.

This is a time for the community and the neophytes together to grow in deepening their grasp of the paschal mystery and in making it part of their lives through meditation on the Gospel, sharing in the eucharist, and in doing works of charity. RCIA 234

In many communities and dioceses the Easter Season is a privileged time to celebrate the Sacraments of First Communion and Baptism.

Prayer of the Faithful

one of the following may be used or adapted according to local needs

- For new members of the Church may they grow in love and understanding.
- For priests and catechist and all who form people in faith may they deepen their own faith through those whom they meet.

Prayer

Father,
you give your Church
constant growth
by adding new members
to your family.
Help us put into action
in our lives
the baptism
we have received in faith

Roman Missal

Mass Texts

may be used when permitted - see Table of Rubrics

- For the Universal Church
- For the Laity

Opportunities and Challenges

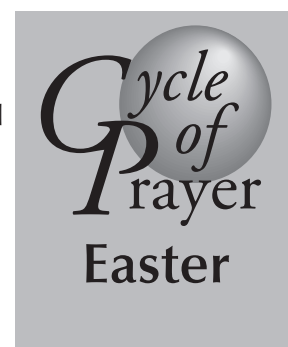
- As in the Season of Lent the readings of Year A have a particular focus on initiation.
- The neophytes, with their godparents, should have a special place within the Sunday assembly. The homily and prayer of the faithful should take into account their needs.
- To bring an end to period of post-baptismal catechesis there should be some sort of celebration near to Pentecost Sunday. This might well be with the bishop who is encouraged to meet with the recently baptised and celebrate the Eucharist with them.
- Mystagogy – the reflection on liturgical celebrations, and on life, and drawing spiritual insight from it is a lifelong activity of the baptised Christian.

Links

- RCIA Network of England & Wales
[www.rcia.org.uk]
- In Communion with Christ
— *further reflections on mystagogical preaching*
[www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/GIRM/In_Communion/index.html]

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Vocations

*Especially on World Day of Prayer for Vocations
— 4th Sunday of Easter*

Background

The World Day of Prayer for Vocations is held each year on the Fourth Sunday of Easter. In the Gospel of John read on this Sunday, in each of the three years, Jesus speaks of himself as the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd who has come so that people may have life to the full, the one who lays down his life for his sheep, the one who knows his sheep — they recognise his voice.

There may be a collection.

Prayer of the Faithful

one of the following may be used or adapted according to local needs

- For vocations to the priesthood and the religious life
may we be open to God's call.
- For priests and religious
may their lives bear fruit in plenty.

Mass Texts

may be used when permitted - see Table of Rubrics

- For Priestly Vocations
- For Religious Vocations

Prayer

Father,
in your plan for our salvation
you provide shepherds
for your people.
Fill your Church with the spirit
of courage and love.
Raise up worthy ministers
of your altars
and ardent but gentle servants
of the gospel.

Roman Missal

Opportunities and Challenges

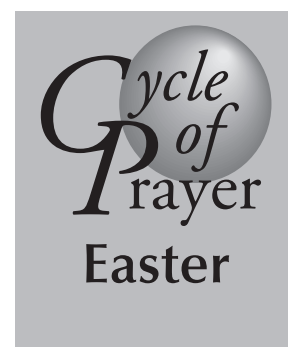
- Explore ways in which a culture of vocation can central to the community.
- How do parish ministries support the work of the clergy?
How might they hinder it?

Links

- Holy Father's message for World Day of Prayer for Vocations
[www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/vocations/index_en.htm]
- National Office for Vocations
[www.ukvocation.org]
- In Verbo Tuo - New Vocations for a New Europe
[www.ukvocation.org/home/verbo.html]
- Catholic Youth Services
[www.catholicyouthservices.org.uk]

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Human Work

Especially on St Joseph the Worker — 1 May

Background

The commemoration of St Joseph the Worker on 1 May was instituted by Pius XII in 1955. It proposes the example and intercession of Joseph as worker and provider.

Prayer of the Faithful

one of the following may be used or adapted according to local needs

- For all who work
may they earn a just wage and be treated with dignity.
- For the stewardship of the earth's resources
so that all may benefit for generations to come.

Mass Texts

may be used when permitted - see Table of Rubrics

- For the Blessing of Man's Labour
- For Productive Land

Prayer

God our Father,
creator and ruler of the universe,
in every age you call men
and women
to develop and use their gifts
for the good of others.

With St Joseph as our example
and guide,
help us to do the work
you have asked
and come to the rewards
you have promised.

Roman Missal (adapted)

Opportunities and Challenges

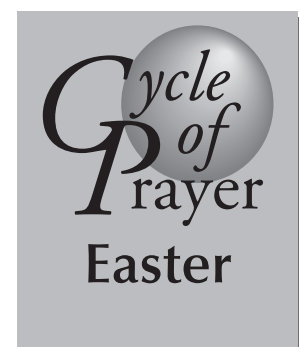
- At the preparation of gifts the texts acknowledge the 'work of our hands' - consider baking bread for the Eucharist and using wine produced locally.
- Many areas have had an influx of migrant workers how might they made be welcome in the parish, what support might the parish be able to offer them.
- What jobs and skills can be found in the parish? How might they be of service to both the parish plant and to the community?
- Explore the Bishops' Conference document on 'The Spirituality of Work'

Links

- Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church
[www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html]
- The Spirituality of Work
[www.catholic-ew.org.uk/resource/sow/]
- Bread for the Eucharist
[www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Documents/Bread.html]
- Resources for Migrants
[www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Preparation/Migrants.html]

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Right Use of the Media

*Especially on World Communications day
— The Ascension of the Lord*

Background

‘Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation’ is the message of the Gospel on the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord. The Solemnity, which falls on the Seventh Sunday of Easter on England and Wales, offers the starting point for understanding the right use of the media. The day is established by the Pontifical Council for Social Communications and each year there is message from the Holy Father.

There may be a collection on this day.

Prayer of the Faithful

one of the following may be used or adapted according to local needs

- For all work in the media may they broadcast with truth and integrity.
- For places and events that are forgotten by the news may they be remembered in our hearts.

Mass Texts

may be used when permitted - see Table of Rubrics

- For the Spread of the Gospel
- For the Progress of Peoples

Opportunities and Challenges

- Review how the parish newsletter and noticeboards are effective means of communication and welcome.
- Make sure that parish activities are reported in the local media, including local radio.
- Develop, or review, a parish website. Does it contain basic information such as where the church is and Mass times? Is it regularly updated? Is it accessible to the visually impaired and other people with disabilities?

Roman Missal (adapted)

Prayer

Father of light,
from whom every good gift comes,
send your Spirit into our lives
with the power of a mighty wind,
and by the flame of your wisdom
open the horizons of our minds.

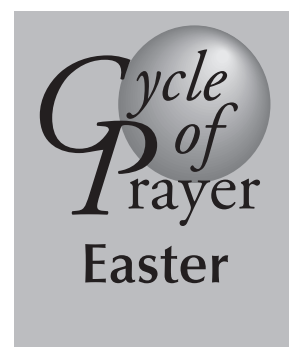
Loosen our tongues
to sing your praise
in words beyond the power
of speech,
for without your Spirit
men and women could never raise
their voice in words of peace
or announce the truth
that is Jesus the Lord.

Links

- Holy Father’s message for World Communications Day
[www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/communications/index_en.htm]
- Pontifical Council for Social Communications
[www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/]
- Catholic Communications Network
[www.catholic-ew.org.uk/ccn]
- Catholic Agency to Support Evangelisation (CASE)
[www.caseresources.org.uk]

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The Church

Especially on Pentecost

Background

Throughout the Season of Easter the first reading at Mass is taken from the Acts of the Apostles. Luke tells the story of the early Church from the Ascension and Pentecost to the early missions of the apostles.

“When the work which the Father gave the Son to do on earth was accomplished, the Holy Spirit was sent on the day of Pentecost in order that he might continually sanctify the Church.” Then “the Church was openly displayed to the crowds and the spread of the Gospel among the nations, through preaching, was begun.” As the “convocation” of all men for salvation, the Church in her very nature is missionary, sent by Christ to all the nations to make disciples of them. *Catechism* 767

Those who with God’s help have welcomed Christ’s call and freely responded to it are urged on by love of Christ to proclaim the Good News everywhere in the world. This treasure, received from the apostles, has been faithfully guarded by their successors. All Christ’s faithful are called to hand it on from generation to generation, by professing the faith, by living it in fraternal sharing, and by celebrating it in liturgy and prayer. *Catechism* 3

Prayer of the Faithful

one of the following may be used or adapted according to local needs

- For the Holy Father
may he be a focus for unity and peace.
- For the local Church
may it be a beacon of Christ.

Mass Texts

may be used when permitted - see Table of Rubrics

- Eucharistic Prayer for Masses for Various Needs and Occasions
- For the Universal Church
- For the Pope
- For the Bishop

Prayer

God our Father,
in all the churches
scattered throughout the world
you show forth the one, holy,
catholic and apostolic Church.

Through the gospel and the eucharist
bring your people together
in the Holy Spirit
and guide us in love.

Make us a sign of your love
for all people,
and help us show forth
the living presence of Christ
in the world.

Roman Missal

Opportunities and Challenges

- Explore how the Eucharistic Prayers express the communion of the Church.
- How might the links between the local parish and the wider Church, diocese and universal, be expressed and understood.
- How does the church building express the nature of the Church - write a guide for visitors
- What opportunities are there for people to get know Church teaching? A book stall or service, a reading group, extracts in the Newsletter, reference in homilies might all be ways of helping people.

Links

- The Holy See [www.vatican.va/phome_en.htm]
- England and Wales - dioceses
[www.catholic-ew.org.uk/dioc/dioceses.htm]
- Consecrated for Worship - resources
[www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/CFW/]

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