

Liturgy Review

Making good worship better

Introduction

This process arose out of a consultation with diocesan representatives held at Sarum College, Salisbury December 1997. It was then piloted in a number of parishes between 1998-2000. This document was approved by the Department for Christian Life and Worship of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales in November 2000.

The purpose of this Liturgy Review is to provide a working tool through which any Christian community can evaluate its worship and effect change and growth where these seem to be appropriate.

It is up to each community to own this process, adapting it to local needs and making choices as each step is planned.

It is both a process of discovery and of becoming.

As in all process, the whole community needs to be involved and the widest possible communication is to be encouraged at every stage. It is hoped that through this process a community may redefine its common values, raise its awareness of its own needs in worship and empower its members to bring new vigour to the liturgy, thus fulfilling the desire of the Second Vatican Council for the 'full, conscious and active participation' of the faithful.

This process may be embraced at any moment in the life of the community but perhaps there are moments of pastoral opportunity which lend themselves, such as: parish/ diocesan renewal; church reordering; evaluation of Mass times; school worship; parish mission.

November 2000

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Aim

This is a process for Christian communities to review their worship. This can be particularly effective at moments of change, crisis or renewal, to help communities find both understanding of their situation and a way forward.

Process

1. *Making the decision*
2. *Appointing the facilitator and the small group.*
3. *Identifying and reflecting on the community and its worship.*
4. *Planning the process*
5. *Providing liturgical formation.*
6. *Seeking the views of the whole community.*
7. *Considering the views of the community in the light of the liturgical formation*
8. *Making the recommendations*
9. *Implementing the changes*
10. *Evaluating the process.*

Notes

1 Making the Decision

The decision to enter this process will vary according to circumstances and will always involve the Parish Priest/Chaplain. Collaborative decisions are preferable:

- a) an open meeting of the parish/community*
- b) parish council*
- c) liturgy group*
- d) other agency within the parish/community*
- e) part of a renewal programme.*

Other possibilities include:

- a) part of a diocesan pastoral plan or diocesan liturgy commission.*
- b) recommendation of the Bishop*
- c) decision of the parish priest alone.*

Once the decision has been made, communication of the intentions of the process to the wider community is essential. The decision to start the process could be marked by a liturgical celebration and an invitation to the community to pray for all involved over the coming months.

2 Appointing the facilitator and the small group

Either the facilitator or the small group may be appointed first. Each may have views on the appointment of the other.

Facilitator

Normally this person would be employed from outside the parish/community and needs to be skilled in process and facilitation, with an understanding of liturgical renewal. The facilitator will participate in the community's worship.

A list of facilitators is available from diocesan liturgy commission, Liturgy Office or Institute for Liturgy and Mission, Salisbury.

The Small Group

This is a steering committee whose responsibility is to manage the review. It should be appointed from across the community, representing the various ministries and opinions and maintaining a balance of age, gender and status. The clergy (team) of the parish/community will need to be full members of the small group.

The first task of small groups (and the facilitator) is to draw up succinct aim for the process (e.g. to improve community's worship; to reorder the church.

3 Identifying and reflecting on the community and its worship

This is basically an audit of the community's current practice and situation. It should draw together a picture of the life and worship of the community, listing statistics as well as identifying strengths and weaknesses and forming a general impression.

The small group designs a way in which this can be done.

The facilitator is involved in drawing up the design and chairs the process.

4. Planning the process

The small group and facilitator having defined their aim and reflected on current practice, identify the appropriate areas of liturgical formation. A programme is drawn up and decisions are made regarding the practicalities of the process and the engagement of speakers. The small group also identifies opportunities for prayer and liturgy as it plans the process.

5. Providing liturgical formation.

This takes effect as drawn up in step 4. Various methods can be used: talks, workshops, ministerial training, group reflection, homilies, mission weeks. This is the central part of the process and adequate time needs to be allocated. The aim of the formation is to deepen the community's understanding, leading to an informed and honest appraisal and a desire for renewal.

6. Seeking the views of the whole community.

A short period of reflection follows the formation programme. The small group with the facilitator draw up a method of consulting with the whole worshipping community. Views are gathered and collated so as to find a way forward.

7. Considering the views in the light of the liturgical formation

The small group formulates proposals based on good liturgical practice taking into account the response to the consultation in step 6.

8. Making the recommendations

The proposals are presented to the community. The small group will indicate how the proposals will be implemented, giving an idea of the timescale.

9. Implementing the changes

10. Evaluating the process.

The implementation of the recommendations is considered according the criteria outlined in step 8. The process is not seen as finite.