

Spirit of the Season

Lent 2008

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

Beyond our boundaries

In our big cities, each worshiping community is likely to contain people from around the world. In order to promote successful integration, we must ensure our liturgy is accessible to those who are unfamiliar with our culture, and those who do not speak English as a native language. Where your congregation includes several people from the same ethnic group, it may be worth setting up a prayer group for that particular nationality, or translating parts of the newsletter into other languages.

We must avoid dis-integration, as we can all benefit from the

liturgical riches offered by those whose liturgical experiences have taken place outside the UK. This might include sharing songs or prayers in different languages, welcoming new ideas for liturgy, decorating the church with traditional cloths or other symbols, finding out more about the social needs of different countries and considering how best to begin to address these.

Share with any of God's holy people who are in need; look for opportunities to be hospitable.

Romans 12:13

The *Ground of Justice* report, commissioned by the 3 London dioceses to study migrants in the Catholic church, observed the significance of church communities to immigrants and the extent to which an immigrant's experience of Church can influence their overall impression of life in Britain.

'For the vast majority of our surveyed respondents though the key means by which isolation can be



*In the Church
no one is a stranger,
and the Church
is not foreign
to anyone, anywhere.*

Pope John Paul II
World Migration Day 1983

addressed at first is through the Church. ...many of these vulnerable people regard Church as a refuge, a harbour of hope and worship, where the idea of a Eucharistic feast is also grounded in lived community. ...Migrants often attend local Catholic churches as well as ethnic chaplaincies and this increases in likelihood if their children are enrolled in Catholic schools. Chaplains observed the development of dual identities in such cases... In sustaining community and drawing migrants into local life the skills of local clergy are vital to success. The factor of a "friendly



The senses of the word



Communication involves all the senses. It is not restricted to just ears and mouth.

In churches we accord the word a special and distinct space. In liturgies in schools and other non-church spaces it is also important to give the word a special place.

A space for the word. First of all a stand, a lectern or ambo ('a reading desk'). It can be decorated using the colour of the liturgical season, for example. The decoration should not be 'over the top' – the focus should be on the reader proclaiming the word not on the stand. At a practical level make sure that readers can actually see the reading and be seen by the assembly.

Within the liturgical space the ambo needs its own distinct area so that it can be a focus for the liturgy of the word. In part this means allowing space for the various liturgical ministers who assist the proclamation of the word. If amplification is necessary make sure that it is at the right height and that the readers are comfortable using it. Pay attention to any wires and make sure that they are not a trip hazard.

Avoid having people read from just pieces of paper. If you are not using a Lectionary a special folder can be created – this again may be decorated.

As a rule when a reader approaches to read he/she bows to the altar as they come to the Ambo. The Altar is a sign of Christ (CTM 97, 141)

Allow for periods of silence within the Liturgy of the Word in particular between the readings.

There should also be a distinct break between the end of the reading and 'This is the word of the Lord'.

At Mass the proclamation of the Gospel is surrounded by a number of signs of reverence. 'When the Gospel is proclaimed it is Christ who is speaking to us. (CTM 98)

First of all we stand to hear the Gospel proclaimed. This would be a good practice to introduce whenever the Gospel is proclaimed in prayer and liturgy.

It is preceded by a sung Acclamation – Alleluia or, in Lent a special text. This can accompany a gospel procession where the Book of the Gospels is brought to be read. If you do not have a particular book this can be another (more highly) decorated folder. The procession can include candles which stand either side of the Gospel when it is proclaimed – helping us to focus. It can also include incense – including all the senses! Incense is offered as a sign of reverence, be careful of any smoke alarm though.

It is custom when the gospel is announced to make the sign of the cross on our foreheads, our lips and our hearts. Practice this with the children so that they know what they are doing and understand that it is a prayer that Christ will be in our minds, on our lips and in our hearts.

Priest" plays quite an important role. (*Ground of Justice*, 6.1)

The issues faced by parents will be seen in the lives of their children.

This report also recognised the extent to which migrants struggle in British society, unable to find work which reflects their level of education or experience, and suffering as victims of exploitation or racism. The Church has a responsibility to look beyond its own four walls and out to the wider community, to ensure Catholics are serving the world, and not simply being served (many migrants work in the service industries - cleaning, caring and catering).

The *Ground of Justice* report (6.2) lists a number of expectations of the Church expressed by migrants, including: assisting migrants to become integrated into the local community; developing English skills; pooling parishioners' knowledge and experience to assist migrants writing CVs, finding jobs, accommodation, schools for their children, opening a bank account etc., arranging visas and other immigration issues; crisis loans; providing information on aspects on life in the UK; seeking justice for undocumented migrants; helping to preserve various cultures and developing ethnic parishes.

Preparing Penitential Rite C

The third form of the Penitential Rite is often misunderstood. In *Celebrating the Mass* it is described:

Lord Jesus, you are... Lord, have mercy. The third form, although a Penitential Act, takes the form of a litany of praise through which the assembly comes to know afresh its need for the love and mercy of God. In this litany the assembly addresses praise to Christ our Redeemer for his saving acts. A number of models are offered (in the Missal) for imitation and adaptation. All such adaptations should, like the models provided, focus on Christ and his mercy. (145)

The Missal allows for a degree of creativity in the invocations (i.e. *Lord, you were sent to heal the contrite*). Before preparing any texts it make sense to look at the model texts provided in the Missal. First, do any of the given text suit your need. Second, notice the common format of all the texts: they are addressed to Christ (*Lord Jesus*) and they speak about what he has done (*Lord Jesus, you...*).

None of the examples speak about us, what we have done or not done. The moment to recall what we have not done is in the silence following the priest's introduction. In his brief introduction the priest may invite to remember what wrong we have done and say something about our need for God's mercy.

The Letter & the Spirit

The Easter season begins with the resurrection of the Lord on the first day of the week – Sunday. The season overflows with both the joy and the impact of this event into the following weeks until Pentecost.

On the first few Sundays we hear about Jesus' post-resurrection appearances to the disciples where often they do not recognise him at first. This is followed by passages from John's Gospel taken from the Last Supper; passages where Jesus speaks about loving one another and about being the way to the Father – what new life in the risen Christ means. Finally the Easter season is a time of preparation for the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

- Where is there new life?
- How do you recognise Christ's presence in your community?
- How can you continue to celebrate his resurrection throughout the 50 days of Easter?

4 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.*

Responsibility of the Priest

To make the celebration 'festive, familial and meditative' (23):

- personal preparation (23),
- manner of acting and speaking (23): especially the eucharistic prayer (52),
- actions and gestures: 'dignity, clarity, simplicity' (23).

Place and Time of Celebration

The criterion is to facilitate:

- 'a living liturgy that is suited to their age' (25),
- optimum receptivity (26), therefore:
- the Mass may be held in a church, or elsewhere,
- the numbers of children should not be too large (28).

Texts of the Mass

- any prayers from the Roman Missal in keeping with the season (50),
- these may be adapted, but keeping the structure and style of presidential prayers (51),
- the Apostles' Creed may be used (39),
- the Sanctus, Agnus Dei, etc. may be adapted for singing (44): **Note:** this applies only for Masses with children,
- congregational responses, the Lord's Prayer, and the trinitarian blessing formula are not to be adapted (39).

The Prayer of the Faithful

The Prayer of the Faithful (sometimes known as the 'bidding prayers' or intercessions) is the time when the community bring their prayers before God in response to the Word. It is a significant way in which pupils can be involved in preparing for liturgy, although care should be taken to offer appropriate support to those given this task.

- The prayers are introduced by the presider, with a sentence which might relate back to the readings.
- There should be a short intention followed by a short period of silence during which people are invited to pray. The intercession is not a prayer in itself, only an invitation to prayer for all present.
- The intentions should always be addressed to the people (rather than directly to God).
- Intentions may begin 'Let us pray for...', 'We pray for...' or simply 'For...'. (They should not begin 'Dear Lord'...).
- The response might be a common spoken response 'Lord, in your mercy: Hear our prayer', or may be adapted according to the liturgical season, for example, 'Emmanuel: Hear our prayer' or 'Risen Christ: Hear our prayer'. A sung response might be used on occasion. Take that the response is easily memorable. Particularly with musical settings make sure that the response is not too long – e.g. longer than the intention.

Writing the Prayer of Faithful

- Keep in mind the four areas of prayer listed above (world, Church, local community, those in need) so that the prayer has a breadth.
- Make a note of current concerns: global and local.
- Look at the scripture readings to see if there are themes or phrases that might be echoed in the intentions.
- As the intercessions flow from the word it can be helpful to check with the priest what he might be including in his homily.
- Keep it short & simple – remember you are writing an invitation for prayer.

- Four or five prayers will be sufficient in any liturgy.
- The intentions generally follow a particular pattern: for the needs of the Church, for public authorities and the salvation of the whole world, for those burdened by any kind of difficulty, for the local community.
- During a Mass for a special occasion the intentions may more closely reflect the nature of the celebration but should be of a sufficiently general nature for all to be able to participate.
- At the end of the intercessions, the presider brings together all the intentions in a concluding prayer, after which the reader returns to their seat.
- Take care not to overload the Prayer of the Faithful (and the Mass in general) with additional prayers which may be better suited to times such as daily classroom prayer or collective acts of worship. These would include devotional or 'campaign/project' prayers. An invitation to pray for a particular project can always be included as an intention.
- For more information see *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (69-71) and *Celebrating the Mass* (171-173).



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

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