

Spirit of the Season

Autumn 2006

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

Praying in Time

Through the Cycle of Prayer – a series of seasonal themes and intentions for prayer – the Bishops encourage the Church in England and Wales to pray and intercede for those in need. The Cycle of Prayer can help schools unite its various liturgies not only around liturgical seasons and Sundays but also around other themes. Through the coming year this page will tell you how.

The Basics

The constant theme of the Liturgy is the saving mystery of Christ's dying and rising. 'Lord by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free. You are the Saviour of the World.'

At Mass we again and again focus on the life and ministry of Christ, and through our remembering and celebrating the saints, we recognise afresh how Christ assists the Church to holiness.

However there are many other themes which it is fruitful for us to explore in our prayer, both at Mass and outside of Mass. The Bishops have highlighted a number of particularly important themes in the Cycle of Prayer. These themes are linked to different seasons and some of them are especially linked to particular days. However all of them can provide a helpful focus for prayer and worship - be that Mass, classroom prayer or assemblies.

Full details of the cycle can be downloaded from www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Calendar/Cycle

In any particular season it is better to choose to focus on not more than two or three themes. This avoids any sense that only token attention is being given to themes, and will also allow for their fuller exploration not only in prayer and worship but also in class teaching and extra-curricular activities. Furthermore during each season there are likely to be other themes not in the Cycle which you will want to focus on, for example during the month of November many schools will want to provide opportunities for remembering and praying for the dead.

**Ordinary Time:
Autumn 2006**

The Spread of the Gospel

Home Mission Day 3rd Sunday in September	17/9/06
World Mission Day Last Sunday in October	22/10/06

**The Harvest,
the Fruits of Human Work,
& the Reverent Use of Creation**

Last Sunday in September and whenever Harvest Festivals are held 22-28/9

Justice and Peace in the World

Racial Justice Day 2nd Sunday in September	10/9/06
Harvest Fast Day 1st Friday in October	6/10/06

All Victims of War

Remembrance Day 2nd Sunday in November	12/11/06
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Young People

Youth Day Christ the King	26/11/06
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Prisoners and Their Families

Prisoners' Week 9-15 November	
Day of Prayer for Prisoners and their Dependants 3rd Sunday in November	19/11/06



Making Connections

Parish-school-family

'As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself, but must remain part of the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty.'

John15:4-5

Christ calls us to 'bear fruit in plenty' and, in order to do it, to live as branches of the one vine, branches that do not exist separately but have an interdependence. For us to be fruitful we need to be aware and involved in not only our own existence but the existence of others. We talk in schools of the home/school/parish triangle; a co-operation between all three to the benefit of children, families and parish. Schools are generally able to make links with the family side of the triangle, but struggle more with the parish relationship.

Often schools work and live independently almost as if parish life did not exist - other than using the parish church for the celebration of the Eucharist on feast days. Sometimes, particularly in secondary schools, the school can be seen as the students' only Eucharistic community - which, no doubt, for many it is. Even so it can be helpful to reflect on the distinctiveness of both school and parish and what might be missing if part of the equation is not there.

Parishes sometimes work the same way. In some parts of the country where parishes are clustered there may be more than one school in a parish and so a need to develop relationships in a number of directions. There can be difficulties where a school's intake is from a number of parishes and thus lose connection with any of them.

But what are we as Church if we are not fully part of the local Eucharistic community in its three fold forms of parish, school and family? Why is this relationship between school and parish so important? What can the school gain from a closer relationship with the parish? What can the parish gain from a closer relationship with the school?

If we are to lead our children to live Christian lives which 'bear fruit' an awareness of what it means to live within a community where we are responsible for each other needs to go further than the community of the school. The diversity in a parish community of age, ethnic background, the sick, the healthy, the rich and the poor presents a microcosm of the world. In a parish in which the life of the community is vibrant, loving and responsive to many needs a model of vine and branches can be modelled. Often the vibrant Christian community of the school provides a model for the parish. Each can learn from the other - though the ideal is perhaps that there is no 'other' but that school, parish and family are manifestly one community.

Action Points

- Try to involve the priests of the parish in the life of the school, with regular times in the classroom – hopefully, always with a defined purpose, being in school at lunchtimes and breaks where more informal contact can be made.
- To link the school with the Sunday liturgy it might be an idea to make contact with the musicians or liturgy group in the parish and prepare one piece of music each week that you know will be sung at Sunday Mass.
- Often parish newsletters list those who are sick or in need of prayer in the parish. These could become part of the regular prayer of the school.

Points for reflection

- Are there ways in which parishes and school might cooperate in offering further help and support to parents in their spiritual lives and their responsibilities for the spiritual lives of their children?
- How does the school welcome and integrate parish and families into the worshipping assembly? Are they made to feel part of the whole? Or like guests who sit at the edge?

Why Sing?

Whenever we watch a film we will be engaged in the story and guided in our response by the soundtrack. Often we may be unaware of even the music's presence; other times when the main theme returns we know that a highpoint of the film is approaching. Without music the experience of the film and our engagement would be very different. If we hear the soundtrack without the film it can evoke strong memories and emotions. We have a good idea of what the purpose of film music is, what it is meant to do and how it achieves it.

On this page in *Spirit of the Season* this year we will look at music in the liturgy: its purpose and how to achieve this.. In some ways music in the liturgy and film music are similar – it gives structure to the celebration establishing the highpoints; it can engage both heart and mind through melody and text; it is memorable. There are also differences: we watch a film as observers, the music tells us what to think; in liturgy we are participants, the music invites us to response. Though music in the liturgy will engage our emotions, care should be taken that it does not manipulate them.

Questions for Reflection

- Where do people sing together outside liturgy? (e.g. Birthdays, Football matches)
- What does the singing 'do' for people gathered?
- Would the experience be different without the singing?

Types of Music

Just as there are different types of secular music so there are in the liturgy. We can identify the different types of music in a number of ways.

- By when we use it in the year or occasion:
Christmas carols, seasonal music, music for funerals.
- By when we use it in the liturgy:
at the opening, a Gospel acclamation, at Communion.
- By its shape or form:
a hymn with verses, a response, an acclamation.
- By what it does:
to gather people, for prayer, to offer praise or comfort, to prepare.

A single piece of music can be categorised in different ways. For example, the Celtic Alleluia we save for just the Easter Season –we would not use it in Lent; it would usually be used as a Gospel Acclamation but we might use it with verses to close a liturgy; the Alleluia is an acclamation and by its upbeat rhythms it brings people together in praise, ready to hear God's word.

Questions for reflection

- When would you use a quiet Alleluia?

Looking Ahead — Advent

Look for songs which speak about: waiting, longing, expectation, journey, the coming kingdom.

The **season** moves from preparation for Christ's coming at the end of time to, in the last two weeks, our preparation to celebrate the birth of Christ.

It is often a challenge to make time to celebrate Advent rather than focussing on Christmas.

The themes of Advent can be contrasted through use of **quiet reflective music**: There is a longing (Quigley), My Soul in stillness waits (Haugen), Wait for the Lord (Taizé) and **stronger music** expressing anticipation: Bring forth the kingdom (Haugen) or O come, O come Emmanuel (trad.)

What shall we sing?

Where we sing in the liturgy highlights that moment in the liturgy. The music we use should ideally correspond to the high point of the liturgy.

At Mass the two points would be the proclamation of the Gospel and the Eucharistic Prayer. Musically this means the Gospel Acclamation and the Eucharistic Acclamations - that is the Holy, Holy, the Memorial Acclamation and the Great Amen. In the next 2 issues we will look at these in more detail.

The other important function of music is to enable participation in the liturgy, not just in the moment when we are singing but also what flows on from the music: the quiet chant that leads into a time of reflection; the joyful Alleluia that prepares us to listen to the Gospel.

What else will we cover?

- Who sings
- Building a repertoire
- Using music in different ways
- Introducing new music
- Using instruments

Putting it together - Assemblies

Last year the back page had a series of ideas for developing individual liturgies using the pattern of Gather - Listen - Respond - Go. This year, as well as finding space for more ideas, we will look at how the pattern can be used in a variety of familiar situations.

Assemblies are a familiar part of school life but are we always aware of the reasons why we assemble? In your school situation what are assemblies used for: announcements, enforcing rules/discipline, prayer?

How do you cope when your time allocation of 15 minutes needs to include a reminder to the pupils to bring their permission reply slips for the school trip into school

tomorrow, an update on the school fundraising total and an announcement from the Head about the rules concerning iPods in school?

Do you expect the pupils to pray straight after they have been disciplined by the Head? Alternatively there is the danger that the liturgy, and in particular scripture, are used to emphasise a disciplinary issue. Is prayer the poor relation at these times of gathering in the school community? Does prayer get relegated or tagged on at the end (if there's enough time)?

Assembly might be the only time in the day/week when the pupils are gathered as a whole school community/year group

– how will you acknowledge this? Good assemblies, as with good liturgy, need careful thought, planning, preparation and leadership. It is important to be clear about what it is you are doing and why you are doing it. Perhaps there is an event/ anniversary/a celebration from the liturgical calendar etc. that will provide the focus for your liturgy/worship? Having a clear structure can often help us to achieve this. Below are some ideas for assemblies, using the liturgical structure of Gather-Listen-Respond-Go. They are not intended to all be used in a single assembly, or to be used in every assembly, but they are intended as a starting point to inspire you to create your own ideas.

Putting into practice

Gather

- Is it always appropriate to have the chairs in rows facing the front? How does the way the children sit reflect the spirit of your liturgy? For example, if you wish to highlight the sense of community perhaps you might think of sitting the children in blocks facing each other where they can be more aware of those they are gathering with?
- How will you create a prayerful atmosphere, to make this gathering different from gathering for a talk or presentation? Think about music as people enter the hall, will there be a focal point, incense/oil burning, a gathering song to sing?
- You may begin the assembly with the Sign of the Cross or another liturgical opening:

Leader: O God open our lips.
All: And we shall praise your name.

Listen

- You may want to read the same piece of scripture but using different translations
- Dramatise the scripture
- Present the Word via Powerpoint images

Respond

- Ask them to discuss what the scripture means to them with the person sitting next to them
- Give them a question to reflect on and a few moments of silence to think about it
- Say a prayer all together or use a prayer with responses (E.g. material from Iona Community)

Go

- Sing a closing song
- End with a prayer of blessing
- Send them out with some action to do during the rest of that day/week (e.g. say thank you to someone who has helped you)

Getting in touch

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