

Spirit of the Season

Easter 2005

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

Going up



One image of Easter is that it is the summit of a mountain. Lent is a path of preparation that leads to the summit; from the top we celebrate new life in Christ and this provides the source for our living the Easter season as we slowly climb down the mountain.


This image of the mountain is often applied to the liturgy – liturgy as the source and summit of Christian living. On that peak might be placed Sunday Mass. Through the week our lives lead us to Sunday where at Mass we have the opportunity to reflect on the week that is gone, its joys and sorrows, and then be nourished for the week ahead. Masses through the week might be seen as foothills – without stretching the image too far – resting places on the journey. Places where we can catch our breath and take stock.

But there are other resting places on the journey. Other forms of liturgy that can provide points of refreshment:

liturgies of the word, times of ritual prayer, collective acts of worship. Each can offer an opportunity for reflection and nourishment. With their simpler format they can often offer a particular theme with a clearer focus. This is not meant to degrade the Mass in anyway. Rather to recognise that the Mass is complex and may not always be the most appropriate way of celebrating. The Church offers many forms of liturgy with Mass as the source and summit. It is important that we know the whole landscape so that we may better appreciate the view from the top.

- What is the relationship between the Sunday liturgy and what we do in school?
- How does the liturgy nourish us?

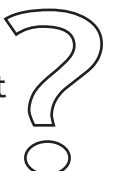
Ever-living God help us to celebrate our joy in the resurrection of the Lord and to express in our lives the love we celebrate



*Opening Prayer
6th Sunday of Easter*

FAQ

Have you ideas for next year – see page 4



Classroom in Easter

Glossary

White and gold and yellow – bright colours to express the joy of Easter. While we are probably familiar with the colours of the liturgical seasons now have you considered numbers and shapes?

The Easter Season is all 1s and 7s and 8s! The day of Resurrection is both the first and eighth day – see Glossary.

The Easter season lasts 50 days which is counted as 7 x 7 + 1. Tradition saw the Easter season as a week of weeks - 7 times 7 days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost (which means 50th day).

Create a large 7 for display on a wall. Using the 7 as a shape divide into 7 sections. You could use it as an Easter calendar: one week in each section or an image or phrase from the Sunday Gospels for the season such as 'they recognised him in the breaking of bread' or the Good Shepherd. Use yellow, gold, white and orange to create a background of the rising Sun - an image of Christ's resurrection.

At the close of each day record something to celebrate on the calendar. At the end of the Easter season have a special time of prayer to give thanks for the many good things recorded. Why not learn a setting of either Ps 117 (118) or Ps 135 (136) and give thanks to the Lord for he is good. Such as *Sing to the mountains* or *Confitemini Domino* (Taizé).

Ascension

A common medieval image of Ascension was just the faces of the disciples looking upwards in a circle and in the middle the soles of Jesus' feet as though this was the last glimpse of Jesus as he was taken up into glory.

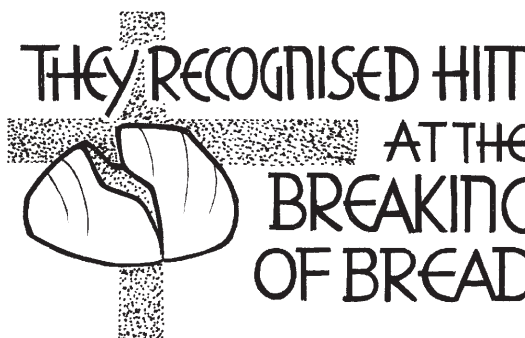
Before he left Jesus promised to all who follow him "I am with you always". Cut out a foot shape for everyone and on each one write: 'N. (Mary) I am with you always'. As part of an Ascension day liturgy place the feet in the liturgical space. Speak about being a follower of Jesus, we follow the path where he has gone before us and also about Jesus being our companion on the journey, someone who walks beside us. Whatever we do and wherever we go Jesus is with us.

Easter Seasonal colour; White or Gold. From Easter Sunday until Pentecost, the Easter Season lasts fifty days.



Easter Sunday is the day of the Lord's Resurrection and appearances to his disciples. It is the greatest of all Christian feasts. Christ rose on the 'third day', or the 'first day of the week', or by some ancient writers on the 'Eighth Day', i.e. the eternal day that, unlike the other seven, would have no ending.

Resurrection (Latin *resurgere* – to rise again) The term describing the rising of Christ from the dead. It is the central doctrine of the Church and the guarantee of the believer's resurrection with Christ through the Sacrament of Baptism. The Resurrection of Christ is celebrated every Sunday, and annually with a three days' celebration from Holy Thursday evening until Easter Sunday evening (the Easter Triduum).

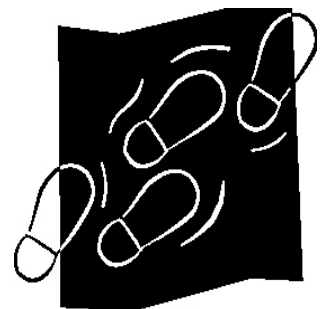


Paschal Mystery (Greek *pascha* – Passover, and *mysterion* – event/enactment) Central to the theology and liturgical thinking of the Second Vatican Council. It denotes the dying and rising of Christ and the accomplishment of that event

in the sacraments of the Church, particularly baptism and the Eucharist.

Sunday is the primary Christian festival. It is the day of Christ's Resurrection, The 'Lord's Day'. Sundays form the 'skeleton' of the whole Church Year.

from *A Basic Catholic Dictionary* © Alan Griffiths published by Canterbury Press, Norwich. www.scm-canterburypress.co.uk



The Fragrance of Christ

Not all schools are fortunate enough to have their own dedicated chapel for liturgy. Often the hall that is used has to be put to lots of different purposes - PE and school dinners being but two of them.

In this series we focus on the senses and how they can lead us into deeper participation in the liturgy. This time the sense we focus on is smell. When the place used for Mass has just been used for PE or for school dinners, sometimes the smells that linger are not entirely appropriate!

What might we smell at liturgy that would be more conducive of prayer? Well we might smell freshly baked bread sometimes. But the more usual smells at liturgy over recent years have been two - the smell of the oil of chrism (used at Baptism, Confirmation and Ordination, and also for the Consecration of a new Church or Altar) and the smell of incense.

There is a different significance to each of these - the oil and the incense. The oil signifies Christ (meaning the anointed one). And its smell in the world signifies the sweetness of the gospel of Christ.

The incense signifies the prayer which we offer - again sweet-smelling, but now rising in clouds to heaven, even as we imagine our prayers rising into the presence of God. It also is used as a sign of honour and reverence - as for example at the reading of the Gospel, when the Gospel book is incensed.

There is little opportunity to use chrism in liturgy at school, but there is plenty of cause to use incense - the sight of the smoke provides a further visual focus to the worship we offer, and the scent of the smoke can engage another of our senses (as well as overcoming smells of PE or school dinners.)

Unfortunately, these days, the use of incense can provoke fits of coughing, and be an aggravation for those who suffer from asthma. Using good quality incense should remove the reason for coughing. Those who are asthmatic can also be seated at a greater distance from where the incense is burnt.

Another alternative, which could be used to give a familiar 'holy' smell to the place where the Church gathers for prayer would be to use scented oil burners using aromatic oils which are now widely available.

Whether from chrism or aromatic oils, sweet perfumed smell prompts us to respond again, through our worship to participate in the attractiveness of the God who loves his people without end.

Smell

Each school, as with each home, develops its own distinctive odours that remind us of where we are; returning to school after a holiday our sense of smell is heightened and we know that the new term is upon us.

Since our halls are used for a range of activities, each with its own - perhaps unpleasant odours - it is important to create the environment for liturgy through fragancing the room in a way that will remind us of the presence of God and the act that we are gathering for. Smokey incense burning during a liturgy can cause fuss and aggravates coughs, but a thin incense stick lit and wafted around the room ten minutes beforehand can leave a wonderful scented aroma. Oil burners are now very popular in our homes and can be left burning throughout a liturgy as long as they are out of reach of the children. Since they

can take up to half an hour to release their fragrance

fully, it is necessary to set up well in advance.

Flowers, such as lilies, produce wonderful sights and

instant, pungent smells

attractive to many but can cause hay-fever, so

consider the participants before

buying too many.



Doing What We Can Together

If we say that liturgy involves drawing participants to discipleship maybe the significant words are 'participants' and 'discipleship'. When we look at our community, what can we do together? How can we help people to participate fully in a way that leads to discipleship, that transform and renew?

Surely, for instance, to offer the celebration of the Eucharist to those who cannot fully participate (Reception to Year 3 and those of other Christian traditions) is inappropriate in that it seems to exclude, but also, perhaps, offers a food too rich to digest.

What, then, can we offer? How can we celebrate together? A structure based on prayer and scripture offers opportunities for an interactive celebration, allowing for questions and answers - for conversation.

A form of the Liturgy of the Word for Children, such as that celebrated in many parishes on a Sunday, would be one possibility. Such a celebration offers opportunity for the exploration of experience and culture in the light of the Gospel. It reflects a similar structure to the learning process provided by 'Here I Am' and by parish catechesis. In such a liturgy the gospel will be proclaimed in whatever form seems appropriate - speech, song, mime,

role play. The gospel will be broken open in the exploration of children's own experience reflection on the teaching of the gospel through question and answer, discussion, development of ways of carrying the teaching into our own lives. This is followed by prayers of intercession.

Such celebrations offer opportunities for experience of ritual, of



silence. The Bishops' Conference of England and Wales has produced *Guidelines for the Celebration of the Liturgy of the Word for Children* [www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/SOS] which will help in consideration and preparation of such liturgies.

If our liturgies can become rich with bold symbols, clear language, moments of silence, experiences that touch all our senses they can truly provide a meeting place for God and God's people.

Forthcoming documents

Two important documents on the Mass and how it is celebrated will be published in April 2005. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM) 3rd edition and *Celebrating the Mass*. GIRM is the user's manual that is found at the front of the Missal. The Directory for Masses with Children draws on GIRM as the basis for its provisions. *Celebrating the Mass* is a teaching document of the Bishops' Conference. It is a comprehensive guide to the Mass and will be a great help for both understanding and preparation. A Study Guide for small groups will also be available called *With Hearts and Minds*. The books will be published by CTS [www.cts-online.org.uk]. Information and further downloadable resources will be available from the Liturgy Office website [www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources].

Ideas welcome



We are planning next year's *Spirit of the Season*. We would welcome your comments and ideas for things to include.

Please email lifeworsh@cbcew.org.uk by Monday 16 May 2005

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