

# Liturgy

N E W S

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The relationship  
between the RISEN  
LORD, the COMMUNITY  
of believers and sacred  
SCRIPTURE is essential to our  
identity as Christians.  
(Aperuit Illis !)

MINDS  
OPEN  
TO THE  
WORD  
OF GOD



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## DIFFERENT ANIMALS

by Tom Elich

**I**N MID-JANUARY 2021, Pope Francis adjusted Canon Law to allow women to be instituted as Lectors and Acolytes. Perhaps the most common reaction in the news media was a ‘ho-hum’, saying that this is what we already do – the pope is just making it official. However, an instituted Lector is not the same as a lay reader; and the Acolyte and lay minister of communion are likewise two different animals.

To understand why this is so, we need to go beyond the liturgical ministry they are seen to carry out and look at the background.

The twentieth century inherited liturgical structures called ‘Minor Orders’ which were steps on the way to ordination as deacons and priests. After the rite of tonsure, candidates would be ordained in turn as porter, lector, exorcist, and acolyte as well as sub-deacon. Only seminarians were given these offices as they proceeded through their training. In 1972, Pope Paul VI suppressed these minor orders and left in their place two lay ministries of word and sacrament: Lector and Acolyte. He made it clear that these were lay ministries into which one would be ‘instituted’ (not ordained) and new rites were prepared. But because of their strong connection with the minor orders, these ministries at the time were still reserved to men. Forty-five years ago, many of us were thinking this would soon change, but it never did until now.

Several years earlier, with the appearance of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, lay men and women had been allowed to read the

scriptures at Mass and to distribute holy communion, not as permanently instituted ministers, but on a ‘temporary’ basis. When the permanent, instituted, male-only ministries were established, many dioceses in Australia preferred to continue with their rostered lay ministries. They were open to all and could be undertaken for a suitable period of several years. This seemed to articulate well the idea that all the baptised share an active role participating in the liturgy.

Pope Paul’s 1972 document, *Ministeria quaedam*, went to some trouble to articulate the relationship between instituted Lector and lay reader, between instituted Acolyte and lay communion minister. The instituted Lector not only reads the scriptures but has greater oversight of the Liturgy of the Word, trains lay readers and takes part in sacramental preparation. Thus he was expected to study and meditate on the word of God. The instituted Acolyte not only helps with the distribution of holy communion inside and outside the liturgy, but is involved in a broader ministry of the altar and in training lay ministers of communion. He was to devote himself to a deeper understanding and care for the Eucharist. In practice, this often seemed to embrace the duties of a senior server or sacristan.

Fifty years ago, two areas in Australia embraced the institution of Acolytes – dioceses clustered around Perth and Sydney. Perth currently has two thousand Acolytes on the books and still runs training courses. Most parishes there have them. They serve in tandem with lay ministers of holy communion (indeed a single set of ministry guidelines in the archdiocese covers Acolytes, lay ministers of communion and altar servers). The rules indicate that only one Acolyte should be vested and serve at any particular Mass. In the Sydney area, the Diocese of Parramatta which inherited the institution from Sydney

when the archdiocese was divided in 1986, decided to discontinue having Acolytes a few years ago. The Diocese of Wollongong has set a five-year limit on the ministry and treats the ministry seamlessly with adult altar servers and lay ministers of communion.

Negative aspects of the institution have appeared from time to time. Perhaps because they are vested on the sanctuary during Mass, perhaps because it is a permanent ministry, there is an unfortunate tendency on the part of some to feel as though they are ‘set apart’ and should receive some precedence. Requests have been made for Acolytes to vest and sit together as a group at diocesan liturgies. I have had a visitor on holidays from Perth present himself at the sacristy in Brisbane announcing that he is an Acolyte, implying that space should be made for his ministry. I am not suggesting that these things are common, but they have happened. Normally now, where Acolytes exist, their ministry is restricted to their own diocese, oversight is given to the parish priest, and arrangements are made to refer those who move to another diocese.

It is, of course, essential that we take steps to include women in Church leadership and ministry. This is the most positive aspect of the new disposition about Lectors and Acolytes. We keep taking steps towards inclusion, albeit tiny ones! Women who were readers were allowed to use the ambo in the sanctuary after 1970. Female altar servers were permitted in 1994. In 2016, women could even take part in the Holy Thursday ritual of the washing of the feet! Now the instituted ministries of Lector and Acolyte are equally open to men and women. It certainly removes a major stumbling block to the adoption of these ministries, but I wonder if this is sufficient reason to reactivate them in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. At a time when the Catholic Church is constantly challenged by the ordination of women in other Churches, is it enough? At a

time when major research and discussion within the Catholic Church is addressing issues surrounding women in the diaconate, is it not far too little too late?

Why would we want to adopt the institution of Lectors and Acolytes when most dioceses have been functioning well for decades with lay ministers of word and holy communion? I would certainly resist the wholesale institution as Lectors and Acolytes of everyone on our parish rosters for readers and communion ministers. The rite of institution is not just a blessing or commissioning.

On the other hand, I see a possibility for careful and judicious use of these formal ministries. A parish might decide, for example, that a lay person who has studied Scripture, who trains parish readers, who organises and leads bible discussion groups, who leads Sunday Liturgy of the Word, who is involved in sacramental preparation, might be a suitable candidate for institution as a Lector. It would be good if their ministry was officially expanded to include preaching.

Likewise a person who has studied theology and takes the lead organising holy communion for those in hospitals and nursing homes, who fosters eucharistic devotion in the parish, who trains and coordinates communion minister and altar servers, who prepares children for confirmation and first communion, who is the chief sacristan... such a person might be suitably installed as an Acolyte. It would give our common baptismal lay ministry a stability, formal public and ritual recognition, along with an episcopal mandate.

Pope Francis' change in this ministry is undoubtedly a positive thing, but it should be seen as just a small step to a much more inclusive future for the Church and its leadership.




# SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

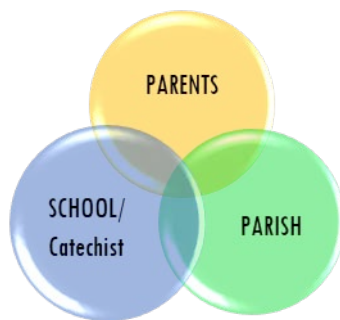
*One size doesn't fit all*

by Mary Anne Baillie

Part of the rhythm of parish life, like the movement through the liturgical seasons, is the parish sacramental program that culminates in the celebration of Confirmation, First Communion and First Reconciliation for children of the parish community. What is not so evident is the partnership of family, school, catechist and parish that come together in this time of preparation.

We have probably all heard at some time that *parents are the first teachers of their child*. This is very true: it is in the family that the child first learns about God and their Catholic faith; it is in the family that the child sees Christian values lived out.

However it was never meant to imply that parents are the only faith educators. As both a teacher in Catholic schools (now retired) and currently a catechist for our parish sacramental program, I have found the understanding of Patricia Malone and Maurice Ryan of the different roles played by parent, parish and school/catechist in a child's faith development very helpful. Each has its own particular role; each is necessary.



In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis speaks of personal accompaniment in processes of growth. *The 'art of accompaniment', the pope says, teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other (Ex 3:5). The pace of this accompaniment must be steady and reassuring, reflecting our closeness and our compassionate gaze which also heals, liberates and encourages growth in the Christian life (EG 169).* In reflecting on my ministry as a catechist in our parish sacramental preparation, I have come to understand my role as that of accompanying.

From the many rich images and learnings that emerge from the Emmaus story (Lk 24:13-33), we can discern four movements in a catechetical process. On the road to Emmaus, the two disciples are discussing the events of recent days (*their lived experience*). A companion joins them on their journey and through his teaching and explanation of the scriptures, they come to understand what has happened (*Scripture, doctrine, Church teaching*). In the breaking of the bread, they recognise Jesus (*Celebration*). The disciples then go on to share this new understanding with others (*Lived Response*).

These four movements in the Emmaus story form a sound catechetical process. Whether applied to the teaching of religion in the classroom or parish sacramental preparation, this process recognises the centrality of the child's lived experience. This is where their faith will be lived out. Through their growing knowledge and understanding of Scripture, doctrine and Church teaching, they can respond to the activity of God in their lives and in the whole of creation. They join with others as a school or parish community to celebrate the mystery of the Risen Christ. These four movements are not sequential lock-step stages but an interconnected process, each movement enriching every other movement.

Our parish sacramental program acknowledges the role of parents as the first teachers of their children. At the same time, it recognises the importance of not leaving parents unsupported in their role as faith educators of their child. A parent or guardian attends each parish session with the child. Then parents and children work in small groups of six or eight families with each group facilitated by a catechist.

The other important component of the sacramental program is the teaching material that will be used. It must be child-centred and use child-appropriate language; it must be attractively presented. The theological concepts, Church teaching/doctrine and Scripture relating to the sacrament are also important, as are the liturgical celebration of the sacrament and its key symbols. Essential too are opportunities for the children to make sense of these teachings and understandings in the light of their life experiences. They will reflect on how they can apply these insights to their lives as they grow in faith to become more like Christ.

We know from the story of the twelve-year-old Jesus lost and found in the temple that he went home with his parents, Joseph and Mary, and continued to grow in wisdom and understanding. We trust that the children of our parish will also continue to grow in their understanding and appreciation of the sacraments. They do not need to know everything at the time of their sacramental preparation.

Canadian publisher Novalis has a variety of resources for sacramental preparation. For first Communion and Reconciliation, our parish has chosen to use the series *On Our Way with Jesus (We Prepare for Reconciliation and We Share in the Eucharist)*. These programs see the role of the catechist as one of *working and walking with parents and their children as important guides and mentors in preparing children for the reception of the sacraments of reconciliation and initiation*. This series allows the catechist to respect the role of the parents as first educators of their children, but also to support them in this role by providing, when necessary, some direct formal teaching or clarifying some understandings. I find I am able to model for parents the appropriate Church language; I am a link between home and parish.

The student books are colourful with contemporary illustrations and photos throughout and therefore appealing to the children. The content is set out in a way that is not overwhelming. The books are thought-provoking. Colourful side bars present short teachings from the bible and from the liturgy, words to remember and ideas adapted from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*; they present something to think about.

There are six sessions in *We Share in the Eucharist* and five in *We Prepare for Reconciliation*. Each session builds on the previous one, leading to a comprehensive understanding of the sacraments. *We Share in the Eucharist* introduces an understanding of Sunday as the day the parish community celebrates and remembers the risen Christ and receives his gift to us of his body and blood. The following five sessions take the children through the different parts of the Mass. In *We Prepare for Reconciliation* the focus is on a loving, forgiving God who offers Life, Love, Joy, Peace and Forgiveness. So before the concept of sin is introduced, the children know God as compassionate and loving.

Woven into each session is relevant theological or liturgical knowledge in simple language that at the same time maintains the integrity of the teaching. Within each session, there are structured activities with opportunities for the child

- ♦ to reflect upon a life experience that relates to the topic,
- ♦ to interact with Jesus' stories retold for children, showing how God wants us to live our lives,
- ♦ to be challenged (for example, by moral dilemmas) to find ways to apply the new understandings in their lives.



The preparation for the sacraments culminates in the celebration of the sacraments in the parish church. The four movements of the Emmaus story (*Life Experience, Scripture/Doctrine/Church Teaching, Lived Response, Celebration*) are evident. The program prepares the children well for the reception of the sacraments. At the same time, there are opportunities for them to grow in their faith and come to a deeper understanding of what it means to accept and follow Christ in their lives.

Within each children's book is a lift-out Family Guide for parents with suggestions on how to support their child throughout the time of preparation. There is also prayer leaflet that has a morning and evening prayer for each theme.

The Leader's Guide has a reduced-size replica of the children's resource on the top half of the page with a guide for the catechist in the lower half. This sets out the focus and the goal of each section as well as guidelines for working through the session.

In fact, the series *On Our Way with Jesus* requires little direct teaching. At times I will talk directly to the parents. For example, at the beginning of the sessions on reconciliation I might explain the different names for the sacrament: Penance, Reconciliation, Confession. This gives the parents the opportunity to reflect on what they themselves were taught and to ask questions. At other times, it might be short direct teaching to the children to ensure they understand a concept - what sin is, what it means to be reconciled. My main focus is facilitating the interaction of parents and child as they work through each activity together.

The programs cater well for this. A New Testament passage, a story of the saints, a reflection on life experiences, a moral dilemma are all designed to provide for conversation between parents and child. It is a non-threatening environment because no one

has to give an answer to the whole group; the children are sharing their answer or explanation with their parents. While I introduce each section, it is a parent or child who reads the material and the parents who then initiate the discussion. While both written and oral responses are sought, the emphasis is not so much on producing a right answer but on the sharing of faith in a conversation between the child and parents. I am free to circulate and talk with each family as necessary. Each session in the student's books concludes with *What Have You Learned?* There are one or two short written exercises to be completed and a *Words to Remember* section with one or two important learnings.

Being a catechist is a position of privilege and trust. I try to heed Pope Francis' instruction to remove my sandals before the sacred ground of the other. For a short time, I am invited to be part of each family's faith journey. We trust the work of the Spirit. Whatever their own faith, these parents, who once presented their child for baptism, now wish to continue that faith journey, to bring their child to become a fully initiated member of the church. They want their child to experience God in their lives and the Spirit is truly there in our midst. For the parish community the sacramental program is a time of joy and hope. Each of us, pastor, catechist, parishioner in our own way have removed our sandals to stand on the sacred ground of our parish families.

■ Mary Anne Baillie, a retired teacher and APRE, coordinates the sacramental program at St Patrick's parish in Mackay. She is a member of the Grail movement.



## CATHEDRAL CHOIR FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

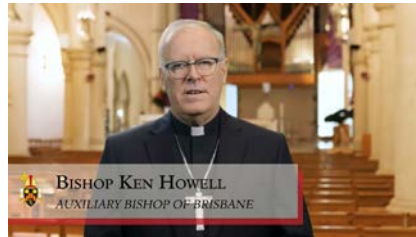
by Christopher Trikilis

Last year 2020 was to have been a year of musical jubilation and celebration for the Cathedral of St Stephen in the Archdiocese of Brisbane. It was fifty years since the liturgical and musical renewal inspired by the Second Vatican Council spurred the re-forming of a cathedral choir by Barry Copley for the cathedral's Easter liturgies in 1970. The anniversary was to trigger a broader musical and liturgical encouragement across the archdiocese for new generations of Catholics. Instead 2020 saw a global pandemic shut church doors, disrupt our usual pattern of life, and force the cancellation or postponement of a series of concerts and other events planned to celebrate this important milestone.

There is no doubt that the beauty, emotion and power of music play a vital role in our worshipping lives. Indeed, these are encouraged and fostered as an integral part of Catholic worship. We live in a world where music surrounds us at every turn – so ensuring the music of the Church retains its unique idiom and flavour remains key: something acutely felt by all visitors and regular worshippers at the cathedral. A commitment to sacred music at the cathedral in fact dates back to its earliest foundations in the nineteenth-century with a choir and pipe organ at its musical core. This legacy continues to be a rich training ground for musicians across the archdiocese and beyond.

As a tribute to all who have been involved with music at the Cathedral of St Stephen in recent decades, the

Cathedral Choir and the Cathedral Schola joined forces in late November to record the hauntingly beautiful *Requiem* of French composer Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924). This landmark work of the sacred treasury beautifully captures the trials and tribulations of life and the hope of the resurrection. Fauré follows the form of the Requiem Mass across seven dramatic movements.



The video of the performance is introduced by Bishop Ken Howell, the auxiliary bishop of the archdiocese who was himself a founding member of the choir and later dean at St Stephen's. Readers are invited to enjoy the recording of this live performance at: [www.facebook.com/archbne/videos/405712633974736](https://www.facebook.com/archbne/videos/405712633974736) (Images are taken from this event).



For the archdiocese and the Church in Australia more broadly, perhaps our anniversary is a good opportunity to take stock musically: where we have come from, where are we now, and where we would like to be tomorrow? No one can doubt that the past fifty years have seen tumultuous change in our church music landscape. Many church communities have experienced boom and/or bust in their liturgical music. Gone are the competent musically-trained religious in parishes and schools who not only practiced their art but devoted their lives to teaching it to young Catholics. No formal tertiary-level qualifications in

Sacred Music are available for budding musicians anywhere in this country, nor even a centre where inspiration and professional development can be offered to church musicians. There are parishes which no longer offer 'live' music matching the 'live' liturgical actions taking place at ambo and altar. We are yet to embrace fully the national hymnal (*Catholic Worship Book II*) which finally allows a common repertory, permitting the faithful to sing the praises of God 'from the same book'.

Perhaps we have strayed from the noble aims found in the *General Instruction on the Roman Missal* and in *Sacrosanctum Consilium*. Their hope of drawing upon the rich, varied



resources of our Catholic musical inheritance would lead the hearts and minds of our worshipping communities to God and to greater things. As we look back, we look forward. May the next fifty years of music-making to the glory of God inspire the faithful and visitors alike in the Cathedral of St Stephen, and lead us to continue what has so wonderfully begun.

*Soli Dei Gloria.*

■ Christopher Trikilis is Director of Music at the Cathedral of St Stephen and a member of the Archdiocesan Commission for Liturgy.



## SUMMIT & SOURCE

*Only one part of  
the terrain*

by Gerard Hore

The Council Fathers at Vatican II described both the liturgy and the Eucharist as 'summit and source', first in the liturgy document (SC 10) and then in the document on the Church (LG 11).

My wife, Geraldine, and I live in Armidale, NSW. A small stream Dumaresq Creek runs through the middle of town. I am not sure where the creek starts. To find the source I would have to move uphill beside the stream, through Armidale and out into bushland. Gravity ensures that we find the sources of streams in country higher than the surrounding land. Of course it is the same for summits. We find places where streams are born – sources – as we climb towards summits. The two go together.

The parallel with the Sunday Eucharist is clear. That hour is the spiritual highpoint of the seven-day cycle within which most of us live our lives. We join with Christ, in the Holy Spirit, to give glory to the Father – a summit experience. We do so to be spiritually strengthened and refreshed for the week ahead as if from a spring of clean, clear water. To celebrate the Eucharist we step aside from our usual daily activities.

Mountain heights with the nearby springing of fresh streams are not



where most people live. Cities, offices and industry are found on the lower slopes or on the plains where streams have become broader, flow more slowly and are more useful for agriculture, trade and transport. Relatively few people live in the mountains.

The summit and the source, the liturgy, constitutes an indispensable part of our Christian life but it is not the whole of that life. No matter how much, like Peter on the Transfiguration hilltop, we rightly think, 'It is wonderful for us to be here' (*Mt 17:4*) at the liturgy, we know we cannot spend very long in this rarefied air. It is not on the mountaintop where we must spread the Kingdom of God. It is not there on the peak that we are going to find opportunities to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome a stranger, clothe the naked, visit the sick and talk with prisoners (*Mt 25:35-37*). These are actions for the plains of our lives. But we risk losing the inspiration and the energy to keep living like that, in service of others, unless we return regularly to the higher ground where we can see a bigger picture, drink from a fresher and more lively stream, and listen in a quieter space to a voice that speaks to our hearts.

At the very end of Mass, we are commanded to 'Go' by the priest: Christ is sending us. What we have just done is not to end here on the summit. Our 'Thanks be to God' is an expression of gratitude for this time on the mountaintop, which has helped us to see part of a big picture more clearly, and to sip from a fresh, clean reinvigorating spring.

*The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fount from which all the Church's power flows.* SC 10

We move out, back down the hill, to the plains of everyday life where we, in the rest of the week, engage in working for Christ's Kingdom, to whatever we turn our hearts, heads and hands. Our weekly journey to the summit and the source, as individuals and as a community, provides a clearer light and a source of energy for that Kingdom-building.

■ Gerard Hore is Education Officer for Catholic Life in the Diocese of Armidale.

# CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AS COMMUNITIES OF THE WORD

by Beth Nolen

Many challenges followed the abrupt intrusion of COVID-19 into our lives, including how to provide sacred rituals for students when there were no (or few) students physically at school. Times of uncontrollable change shine a spotlight on both strengths and cracks in our existing ways of working and being, and reveal helpful insights. When we look back at the experience of 2020, there are key areas and core elements that, when conducted well, enabled Catholic schools to flourish as authentic COMMUNITIES OF THE WORD.

## 1. Fostering relationships

Being deprived of our typical interaction with our communities shed light on how much we need one another. At the end of our lockdown period of 'school from home', curiosity drove me to ask my Year 8 son about his thoughts on being home-schooled in the future. *Mum, that's a really bad idea. I would have no friends, and I've realised that I actually need my teachers to explain some things that I don't understand in textbooks. We will never have this conversation again!* Unexpectedly, he has had no word of complaint about school ever since, and a whole new way of working with purpose and appreciation of his school community has developed.

Fostering genuine relationships is the basis for developing authentic communities and is at the heart of Catholic schools being communities of the word. One example comes from a Prep class at St Thomas More, Sunshine Beach, Qld. In 2020, teacher

Tracy Flynn regularly invited parents to participate in the class morning prayer ritual. When 'school from home' started, parents began asking Tracy to share her class prayer. One parent independently created a video link for the class to stay connected, and then Tracy received requests from parents to lead her class for prayer. Participation via video allowed Tracy to see that many children had created their own prayer spaces at home and some family members joined in this time of prayer together.



The word of God refers to the Scriptures. The Word of God (with a capital letter) refers to Christ. The story of Jesus in John's Gospel begins: *In the beginning was the Word; the Word was with God and the Word was God.* The word of God reveals the Word of God to us. The word leads us to discover who Christ is and takes us into a deeper relationship with him. This is at the heart of all Christian spirituality. Christian iconography often shows the risen Christ holding the book of the word of God.

My daughter's school at St Dymphna's Aspley, Qld, sent home ongoing resources using Microsoft *Sway* so that they could continue being a community of the word while most students were at home. These resources engaged our family in the story and the celebration, highlighting meaning through images, videos of a small group of students at school completing various parts of the ritual, readings from Scripture, reflections and prayers. I asked a staff member how the school was able to create such high quality resources quickly in response to rapidly changing conditions for celebrating liturgies. The answer was, *Relationships. We drew on people's different strengths, including technology, to bring it all together.*

## 2. Nurturing spirituality

Email correspondence from a Prep student parent in Tracy's class at Sunshine Beach highlights what can happen through nurturing spirituality. A parent describes how she was surprised





to find her daughter alone by a window early one Saturday morning, so she asked her daughter if she was okay:

*Yes. I'm just sitting here with God, in here (pointing to her chest). How sweet!!! I said, That's so nice, Sweetie, that means you are never alone doesn't it!? And she nodded. My goodness what a beautiful moment. Thank you for your spiritual guidance!!*

(Email between the parent and Tracy; used with permission from both)

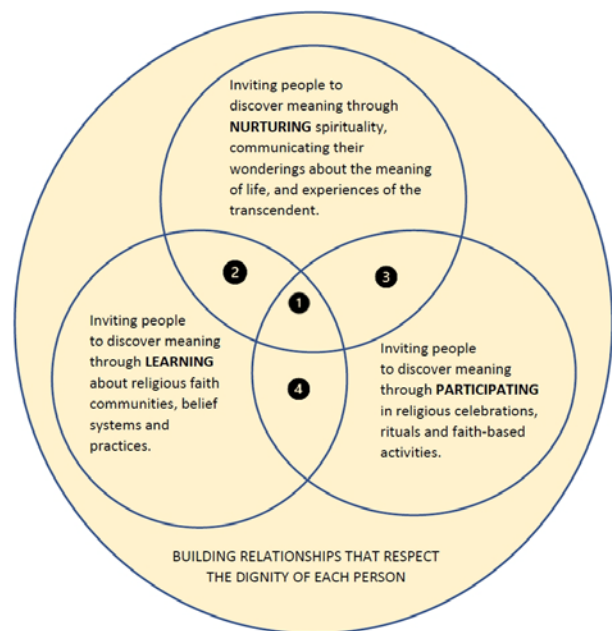
Although the term 'spirituality' does not have a universally accepted definition (Adams..., 2016), Nye's ground-breaking work found that *all* children have a sense of spirituality (Nye, 1998). Nye describes spirituality for children and young people as *recognising and supporting God's ways of being with them, and their ways of being with God* (Nye, 2017). Her research has also found that the younger the child, the more likely they are to seek spirituality naturally by pondering the bigger questions of the meaning of life, death, identity and purpose. There is also increasing recognition that spiritual health is an essential component of adolescent health (Michaelsona..., 2016). As children grow older, they may describe themselves as spiritual but not religious, highlighting the broad definitions required for understanding spirituality (Michaelsona..., 2016).

Nye (2017) reflects that, after spending time listening to children talk about their spirituality for her research, they were frequently unable to identify anyone else with whom they could continue these conversations. To nurture spirituality, Nye recommends that adults respectfully listen to our young people and allow them time and space to articulate their deep questions about life and the meaning of their existence and their insights into God; thus adults teach the use of silence. Adults create safe spaces that allow students to ponder and communicate their experiences of awe, wonder, and a wisdom and energy source beyond themselves that they may name as God. Students build their capacity to engage in significant prayer rituals and liturgies.

Understanding students' spirituality is invaluable for creating liturgical rituals where students can find meaning and leave feeling challenged, nourished and inspired to be the best version of themselves. Through my PhD research focusing on what Early Years teachers need to build capacity to teach Scripture, the rewards of focusing on spirituality as a

gateway for teaching religious education have become apparent. Data from a Year 3 teacher revealed that, despite successfully enabling her Year 3 class of 2019 to discover the riches of Scripture, she could not engage her 2020 Year 3 class in religious education until she focussed on spirituality first. It was then that exploring Scripture through religious education became deeply meaningful. The major difference the Year 3 teacher identified between the classes was that the 2019 cohort mainly came from families where religion was part of family life. For most students in the 2020 cohort, this was not the case. Therefore, nurturing spirituality became the access point in the religious education of the class of 2020 for discovering rich meaning from Scripture.

Spirituality refers to the student's interior meaning-making journey, which is different from the religious education activity of cognitively learning about faith communities and their religious beliefs and practices, and different from participating in celebrating as a community of the word. While all three are strongly interconnected, independently attending to each element ensures time and intentionality for all three core elements. When schools foster healthy relationships and engage well in all three components, rich and deep meaning is attainable for all participants when Catholic school communities celebrate the word of God.



### A MODEL OF CORE ELEMENTS FOR CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

- ❶ Discovering authentic meaning from religion.
- ❷ How is the mystery of God experienced?
- ❸ What opportunities exist for experiencing God?
- ❹ How is meaning found and expressed through participating in religious celebrations, religious rituals and faith-based activities?

The model above builds on the model of religious education in the religion curriculum for the Archdiocese of Brisbane (*Religious Education Curriculum P-12*, 2020). Note the intentionality of all three elements, while the goal of each element is to discover meaning. Faith is always invitational through each element. It is also important to highlight that the element of spirituality is not about teaching anything. Instead, it is about ensuring time for reflecting, pondering and listening to how each person experiences wonder, awe, mystery, transcendence and the deepest questions of life underpinning how people choose to live.

### 3. Teaching prayer and Scripture

Recognising that students come to Catholic schools with diverse backgrounds, there is a need for finding out what students know and understand about prayer. Sr Hilda Scott from the Jamberoo Abbey in New South Wales reflected on her experience at the Ignite Conference in 2016. In her view, young people were thirsting for ‘understanding prayer’, and ‘to understand how to connect with God’ (Scott, 2016). Therefore, teaching prayer is more than merely teaching people to pray particular words. Sr Hilda’s own definition of prayer is ‘God in communication with us’ (Scott, 2018).

Being a community of the word demands that we foster prayer skills to experience ‘God in communication with us’. Teaching children how to use silence is critical, especially in a world where silence can be rare. Mantra prayer and breath prayer (focusing on every breath) are excellent for periods of silence.

Similarly, exploring Scripture as literature, engaging in critical thinking about the text, and pondering how the text reveals God’s dream for our world leads to using Scripture well for prayer rituals and liturgies in schools. Finding out about the text includes cultural insights, authorship, the context of the text, and the genre of the text, which opens many new insights for drawing a multiple layers of richness from the text.

### 4. Discovering meaning

At the end of the 2020 school year, I engaged in conversation with someone who is not Catholic, who spoke about attending a Liturgy of the Word at St Joseph’s primary school, Nundah, Qld, which she found deeply significant. Students had ‘broken open’ the two different stories of the birth of Jesus, understanding the Scripture stories so well they could explain their appreciation the stories. In the liturgy, there was creativity, participation, deep meaning-making – and no photography – as the community recognised this was not a performance but a rich experience of the word of God.

The opportunity to teach students about Scripture before using the texts for prayer rituals and liturgies affords Catholic schools a clear advantage. Allowing students to bring their creative ideas to preparing a Liturgy of the Word allows the potential for meaning-making through the ritual to deepen significantly. The use of appropriate and diverse drama strategies can draw attention to critical parts of the text. After the proclamation of Scripture, students might enter the world of imagination to interview one of the characters, the Bible author or even God. Recognising that Scripture has the potential to speak to the heart of any person, countless strategies can shine a spotlight on how the text calls people to live today. Encouraging students to identify multiple interpretations of Scripture ensures a deeper understanding of the power of the text. Anything that encourages participants to discover deeper levels of appropriate meaning from the word and the ritual will help create powerful experiences where people are engaged, challenged and inspired to be their best selves when they leave.



Ponder what aspects of the liturgy we want to highlight to strengthen participants’ meaning-making. Identify when students may be in danger of ‘going through the motions’ rather than understanding the significance of what they are doing. Respond by leading ‘mindfulness moments’ such as pausing during each action to make the sign of the cross. *In the name of the Father* – we pause to think about God’s love in our lives; *and of the Son* – we pause to remember the presence of Jesus here with us; *and of the Holy Spirit* – we pause to recall how God’s Spirit is actively at work in our hearts.

Seeking feedback allows leaders to fine-tune how to provide valuable prayer and ritual experiences. Strategies such as making time for journal writing, respectful listening or anonymous feedback posts in a safe environment can enable students to respond to questions such as, *What meaning did you find through this experience? How did this experience challenge you? How did this experience inspire you to be the best version of yourself?*

Even casual conversations with students can reveal deep insights, as I found while talking with a Year 8 student at a social gathering in 2020, when he stated, *I think we should have more liturgies at our school.* When pressed to answer why, the student paused to reflect and then replied, *Because they remind us who we are and who God wants us to be.* That student showed a surprisingly deep understanding of *why* we continue celebrating as communities of the word, even during the challenges of living in a pandemic.

Catholic schools can provide profound experiences of being a community of the word, where participants listen with their ears, minds and hearts, and leave wanting to return because the experience has enriched their lives. Catholic schools have the gift of being able to provide three core elements that invite people to discover meaning: through religious education that engages students and leads to critical thinking; nurturing and listening to the spirituality of students; and participating in religious celebrations, rituals and faith-based activities. When all three elements are conducted well, within an environment that intentionally fosters healthy relationships between students, parents and staff, Catholic schools flourish as COMMUNITIES OF THE WORD.

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## CALENDAR ADDITIONS

St Martha has been listed in the Roman calendar for 29 July since the thirteenth century. Now the commemoration has been expanded to include her sister Mary and their brother Lazarus. Jesus was good friends with this family at Bethany. The story of Mary who sat listening to Jesus while Martha prepared the table is well known, as is the story of Lazarus who is brought back to life. The feast becomes a festive celebration of family life, friendship and hospitality. The liturgical prayers for the day have been modified to include all three and will soon be translated into English.



Three other saints, all Doctors of the Church, have been included as optional memorials in the calendar. The most well-known in Australia is ST HILDEGARD OF BINGEN (1098-1179). The chants she composed have become extremely popular in recent decades. Abbess at a monastery on the Rhine River, Hildegard was a political activist and a mystic visionary, a musician and a poet. She was one of the most remarkable women of the Middle Ages (feast day: 17 September). Secondly, ST GREGORY OF NAREK was an erudite priest and monk in Armenia in the tenth century (feast day: 27 February). And finally, ST JOHN DE AVILA, sixteenth-century priest, was a great preacher and reformer at the time of the Council of Trent (feast day: 10 May).

## THE LECTIONARY TRANSLATION

In England, Wales and Scotland, the final decision on a new Bible translation for the Lectionary looms. The bishops have decided to use the English Standard Version (ESV), a literal translation in the tradition of the Revised Standard Version (RSV), which makes no attempt to employ inclusive language. It is being widely criticised by church-goers and academics.

Meanwhile, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has decided to proceed with the Revised New Jerusalem for our Lectionary and is seeking the collaboration of Ireland and New Zealand. This would maintain the cadence of the Jerusalem Bible which we have used for fifty years but at the same time provide a scholarly and inclusive text. It is proposed that we would retain the Grail psalms, albeit in a new translation. The Irish bishops have opened the question up for consultation.

## FAREWELL TO A HOME



Anglican historian from New Zealand, Dr Jane Simpson, has prepared ritual material to farewell a home. The project began a decade ago with the devastating earthquake in Christchurch. This brought to the fore the grief and loss families experience when they lose their homes or have to leave their dwelling after many years. Rites exist for the closing of a church building and taking leave of a church site, but she found that nothing comparable existed for the family home. Yet leaving a home is frequently a life-changing transition and a rite of passage is an important pastoral resource. The fruit of her work is now published: *The Farewelling of a Home: a Liturgy* (see the publisher's website: [www.poiema.co.nz](http://www.poiema.co.nz)).

## IN MEMORIAM



Discolored Carmelite REGINALD FOSTER (1939-2020) died of the coronavirus on Christmas Day after more than a decade in retirement. An extraordinary Latinist who lived and breathed the language, he was attached to the Office of Latin Letters at the Vatican for forty years, translating and composing official and papal documents. This colourful character who always dressed like a tradesman was well known to generations of students in Rome. His summer classes were legendary: he would take his students to the Roman Forum to declaim classical speeches and study the inscriptions. He lamented the decline of Latin which he spoke with elegant perfection, but he was in no way a traditionalist when it came to liturgy. For Reginaldus, Latin looked forward – he tweeted in Latin, wrote a Latin version for Vatican ATMs, found Latin words for new inventions, dreamt and swore in Latin.

Archbishop PHILIP WILSON died on 17 January 2021 at the age of 70. He was Bishop of Wollongong (1996-2001) and Archbishop of Adelaide (2001-2018). He was a founding member of the National Liturgical Architecture and Art Council in 2010 and always interested in questions around sacred art and architecture.



## YEAR OF ST JOSEPH



*St Joseph the Worker and the Premonition of the Cross, St Thomas Aquinas Church, St Lucia (WJ Dowling, Dublin, 1960)*

A century and a half ago, when devotion to St Joseph was particularly widespread, he was proclaimed patron of the universal Church. To mark the anniversary of this event, Pope Francis declared 2021 a Year of St Joseph. Parishes will already have celebrated the principal feast of St Joseph on 19 March. There are further opportunities to observe this year. The commemoration of St Joseph the Worker is held on 1 May. While this ranks as an optional memorial in the liturgical calendar, this year would be a good opportunity to celebrate it with some solemnity. Australia's patronal feast of St Mary MacKillop on 8 August could also focus on St Joseph, given that Mary adopted the special patronage of Joseph for her sisters from the beginning of her teaching ministry.

The letter of Pope Francis, *Patris Corde*, is very beautiful and easy to read. It explores Joseph under the following headings: a beloved father, a tender and loving father, an obedient father, an accepting father, a creatively courageous father, a working father, a father in the shadows. The image that emerges is far from the aged figure in the background so often seen in iconography; instead we see an energetic and proactive protector of Mary and Jesus.

## POPE ON LITURGICAL PRAYER

Pope Francis' Wednesday catechesis has recently addressed Christian prayer. On 3 February 2021, he spoke about liturgical prayer.

*In the history of the Church, there has often been a temptation to practise an intimist Christianity that does not recognise the spiritual importance of public liturgical rites. Often, this tendency claimed the supposed greater purity of a religiosity that did not depend on external ceremonies, which were considered a useless or harmful burden. At the centre of the criticism was not a particular ritual form or a particular way of celebrating, but rather the liturgy itself, the liturgical form of praying.*

*Indeed, one can find certain forms of spirituality in the Church that were unable to integrate adequately the liturgical moment. Many of the faithful, while participating assiduously in the rites, especially in Sunday Mass, drew nourishment for their faith and spiritual life more from other sources of a devotional type.*

*Much has been achieved in recent decades. The Constitution Sacrosanctum Concilium of the Second Vatican Council represents a pivotal point in this long journey. It comprehensively and organically reaffirms the importance of the liturgy for the life of Christians, who find in it that objective mediation required by the fact that Jesus Christ is not an idea or a sentiment, but a living Person, and his Mystery a historical event. The prayer of Christians passes through tangible mediations: Sacred Scripture, the Sacraments, liturgical rites, the community. In Christian life, the corporeal and material sphere cannot be disregarded because, in Jesus Christ, it became the way of salvation. We could say that we should pray with the body too: the body enters into prayer.*

*Therefore, there is no Christian spirituality that is not grounded in*

*the celebration of the sacred mysteries. The Catechism writes: 'In the sacramental liturgy of the Church, the mission of Christ and of the Holy Spirit proclaims, makes present, and communicates the mystery of salvation, which is continued in the heart that prays' (2655). The liturgy, in itself, is not just spontaneous prayer, but something more, and more original: it is an act that founds the whole Christian experience and, therefore, prayer too is an event, it is a happening, it is presence, it is encounter. It is an encounter with Christ. Christ makes himself present in the Holy Spirit through the sacramental signs: hence the need for us Christians to participate in the divine mysteries. A Christianity without liturgy, dare I say, is a Christianity without Christ, without the Total Christ. Even in the barest of rites – such as those some Christians celebrate in places of incarceration, or in the hiddenness of a house in times of persecution – Christ is truly present and gives himself to his faithful.*

*Precisely because of its objective dimension, the liturgy asks to be celebrated with fervour, so that the grace poured out in the rite is not dispersed, but rather reaches the experience of each one. The Catechism explains it very well when it says: 'Prayer internalises and assimilates the liturgy during and after its celebration' (2655). Many Christian prayers do not originate from the liturgy but all of them, if they are Christian, presuppose the liturgy, that is, the sacramental mediation of Jesus Christ. Every time we celebrate a baptism, or consecrate the bread and wine in the Eucharist, or anoint the body of a sick person with holy oil, Christ is here! It is he who acts and is present just as he was when he healed the weak limbs of a sick person, or when he delivered his testament for the salvation of the world at the Last Supper.*

*The prayer of the Christian makes the sacramental presence of Jesus our own. What is external to us becomes part of us: the liturgy expresses this even in the very natural gesture of eating. Mass cannot simply be 'heard'; to say, 'I am going to listen to Mass' is an incorrect expression. Mass cannot merely be listened to, as if we were just spectators of something that slips away without our involvement. Mass is always celebrated, and not only by the priest who presides, but by all Christians who experience it. And the centre is Christ! All of us, in the diversity of gifts and ministries, join in his action, because he, Christ, is the Protagonist of the liturgy.*

## SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR 2021



On Australia Day, Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann was announced as Senior Australian of the Year. She is a respected elder, artist and educator from Nauiyu (Daly River) in the Northern Territory.



Miriam-Rose was the first Aboriginal person to become a fully qualified teacher in 1975 and worked especially in the area of the visual arts in education. She eventually became the Principal in her hometown at St Francis Xavier Catholic School. Most Australian Catholics would know her paintings of the Stations of the Cross. This example of her art, entitled *Reconciliation: People Working Together*, hangs in St Joseph's Church in Katherine.

## DISABILITY AND THE SACRAMENTS



Celebrating the International Day of Persons with Disabilities in December 2020, Pope Francis urged parish communities not just to care for those with disability but to include them as active participants in the liturgy. Inclusion, he said, is the first 'rock' on which to build our house. *To help our society to 'build back better', inclusion of the vulnerable must also entail efforts to promote their active participation. Before all else, I strongly reaffirm the right of persons with disabilities to receive the sacraments like all other members of the Church. All liturgical celebrations in the parish should be accessible to them, so that, together with their brothers and sisters, each of them can deepen, celebrate and live their faith... People with disabilities, both in society and in the Church, wish to become active subjects of our pastoral ministry and not just its recipients...*

## AUSTRALIAN MISSAL

At their final meeting in 2020, the Australian Catholic bishops decided to pursue two initiatives to improve the Missal which we have been using for the last decade. Firstly they agreed that it would be appropriate to revise the Collects to simplify the language and grammar of the prayers and to fix ambiguities in the theology. This would need to be undertaken with other English-speaking episcopal conferences who share a common text. Secondly they agreed that, now that St Mary MacKillop is celebrated as a solemnity in the Australian calendar, it would be appropriate to commission a proper Preface for the feast.

## DANTE (1265–1321)

Dante Alighieri, Florentine poet, died 700 years ago. Writing in the vernacular rather than in Latin, he helped shape the Italian language and made it a legitimate vehicle for literature. His most important work is the *Divine Comedy*, a poetic narrative in three volumes in which Dante journeys from *Inferno* through *Purgatorio* to *Paradiso*. It can be understood as the story of transformation of the Christian pilgrim living the experience of the Easter Triduum. The writing draws on the antiphons and psalms of the liturgy; it includes references to liturgical hymns such as the *Gloria* or the *Te Deum* and to the texts of the liturgy itself. The journey from penitence to praise draws from and in turn shapes the Christian imagination. It has the texture and beauty of a cosmic liturgical ceremony.



On 25 March 2021, Pope Francis released a document *Splendour of Light Eternal* to mark the anniversary, noting that Dante *wants to show us the route to happiness, the right path to live a fully human life, emerging from the dark forest in which we lose our bearings and the sense of our true worth*. The pope spoke of Dante as a prophet of hope to encourage us today in the face of inhumanity and a lack of confidence for the future.

## LECTORS AND ACOLYTES

On 11 January 2021, the instituted lay ministries of Lector and Acolyte were opened to women for the first time. In 1972, these ministries replaced the so-called minor orders (porter, lector, exorcist, acolyte, sub-diaconate) which were steps to ordination to the priesthood. The Vatican press release indicated that Pope Francis was keen to formalise and institutionalise the

presence of women at the altar. He placed the decision in the context of carrying forward the renewal of Vatican Council II and its rediscovery of the baptismal dignity of all. He said there was a new urgency today to *rediscover the co-responsibility of all the baptised in the Church and the mission of the laity in a particular way* (See Editor, p. 2).

## ZAIRE LITURGY AND INCULTURATION

Soon after the Synod on the Amazon, the vaults of St Peter's in Rome resounded to the sounds of drumming and singing from Zaire as Pope Francis joined the local Congolese community to celebrate the Eucharist (*above*). Clothed in bright colours, participants swayed and danced as they brought forward the gifts of creation which included the bread and wine for Mass. Now he has recommended the Zaire rite as a model for what might be done in the Amazon.



The pope has written the preface for a book about the history of the Zaire rite in which he recommends further work on inculturation in the liturgy. The book, a collection of articles in Italian edited by Congolese religious Sr Rita Mboshu Kongo, is titled *Pope Francis and the Roman Missal for the Dioceses of Zaire: a promising rite for other cultures*. He quotes his own document from the Amazon Synod: *...we can take up into the liturgy many elements proper to the experience of indigenous people in their contact with nature, and respect native forms of expression in song, dance, rituals, gestures and symbols. The Second Vatican Council called for this effort to inculturate the liturgy among indigenous peoples; over fifty years have passed and we still have far to go along these lines.*

## NEW LITURGY HEAD



The Church is eagerly awaiting the appointment of a new Prefect for the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. After five years in the position, the term of appointment of Cardinal Robert Sarah from Guinea had expired; he had also submitted his resignation in 2020 when he turned 75 and this has now been accepted.

He has been at odds with Pope Francis during his tenure, vocally supporting traditional styles of liturgy (advocating the *ad orientem* arrangement for Mass) and only reluctantly introducing papal reforms (he took over a year to implement the opening of the Holy Thursday foot washing to women). He did not agree with the 2017 document *Magnum Principium* which returned much of the control of liturgical translation to local bishops conferences – this new approach to translation was the work of English Archbishop, Arthur Roche, Sarah's deputy at the Congregation.

Pope Francis has initiated a consultation process, technically a 'visitation', to assess the situation in order to make the best provision for the future. The visitation is being led by Bishop Claudio Maniago who is responsible for liturgy at the Italian bishops conference.

## MASSES IN ST PETER'S BASILICA

Visitors to St Peter's Basilica have often been scandalised by multiple, simultaneous private Masses being celebrated at side altars, frequently using the old Tridentine rite in Latin. Now the Secretariat of State has

reasserted the liturgical norms of Vatican Council II by inviting priests to join one of the communal Masses celebrated with the participation of a lector, cantor and a community of the baptised. There are at least ten of these Masses every day in the basilica. The unrestricted private Masses will be stopped, and the extraordinary rite in Latin will be limited to four time slots at one altar in the grotto below the basilica. Naturally these provisions have made waves in traditionalist communities. But the new practice affirms the Eucharist as a sign of unity and the action of the whole Church. Pilgrim groups who come to St Peter's with their own chaplain may continue to celebrate a communal Mass in the grotto. The timing of the reformed practice coincides with Cardinal Sarah's resignation from the Congregation of Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments and also the appointment of Cardinal Mauro Gambetti as the new archpriest of the basilica.

## BLESSING SAME-SEX COUPLES

In many parts of the world, Church leaders and communities have been reflecting on how best to respect, love and accompany LGBTQ+ Catholics. They share, after all, the dignity of all the baptised as our brothers and sisters



in Christ. One of the proposals being discussed, especially in Germany but also in other parts of Europe, is whether it is appropriate to bless same-sex couples, given that we are unable to celebrate their marriage. In response to a question to this effect, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has replied in the negative. The Congregation affirms that the Church can bless homosexual persons, but *it is not licit to impart a blessing on relationships or partnerships, even stable, that involve sexual activity outside of marriage... as is the case of the unions between persons of the same sex. The presence in such relationships of*

*positive elements, which are in themselves to be valued and appreciated, cannot justify these relationships and render them legitimate objects of an ecclesial blessing, since the positive elements exist with the context of a union not ordered to the Creator's plan*

Understandably this decision caused widespread reaction. Many wish the question had not been asked, so that pastoral practice could be allowed to develop quietly in individual cases. No doubt, this will continue notwithstanding the CDF statement. Archbishop Mark Coleridge, president of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, tweeted: *A Church that says we can't ordain women is equally obliged to ask how we might include women in leadership... a Church which says we can't bless same-sex unions is equally obliged to ask how we might include same-sex couples.*

## OUR COVER

MINDS OPEN TO THE WORD OF GOD

*"The relationship between the RISEN LORD, the COMMUNITY of believers and sacred SCRIPTURE is essential to our identity as Christians. Without the Lord who opens our minds to them, it is impossible to understand the Scriptures in depth. Yet the contrary is equally true: without the Scriptures, the events of the mission of Jesus and of his Church in this world would remain incomprehensible. Hence, Saint Jerome could rightly claim: 'Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.'" (Aperuit Illis 1)*

Each of our cover designs this year will take a quotation from Pope Francis' document on the beauty of the word of God (*Aperuit Illis*). The Mass is made up of Liturgy of the Word / Liturgy of the Eucharist. How well do we celebrate God's word when the Scriptures are read in church? Is it a powerful encounter with the risen Lord?

## Jeremy Driscoll, *Awesome Glory: Resurrection in Scripture, Liturgy, and Theology*,

(Liturgical Press, 2019) 144 pp.

by James Cronin

In this book, Benedictine Jeremy Driscoll has chapters on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, the Paschal Vigil, Easter Day and its Octave, Ascension, and Pentecost. He offers perceptive commentary on the day, the liturgy and the readings. While in practice our liturgy may rarely be as glorious as here described, the book is a great encouragement. How many parishes, for instance, have enough puff left to do justice to the wonderfully evocative Masses of the Easter Octave?

Ideally the book should be read with Lectionary in hand. The way Driscoll treats the lectionary texts is *different from how the scriptural texts about resurrection are of often treated, concentrating on what the text would have meant for its original audience... Instead we take the scriptural texts as the liturgy presents them and try to understand why the liturgy uses them in this way. I call this 'liturgical exegesis'* (pp. 33-34). Some examples of his approach will be helpful.

The Mandatum Gospel of Holy Thursday has seven strong verbs – rather like the Last Supper scene with taking, blessing, breaking, and sharing. *Jesus rose from the supper, took off his garments, took a towel and tied it around his waist; then he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet and dry them with the towel around his waist.* This presages the morrow as surely as does the four-fold action of the Last Supper. Driscoll uses these verbs to

draw out a parallel with Jesus' death and resurrection (pp. 43-44).

Good Friday is not a funeral. *We are going to 'celebrate' the Lord's passion – obviously not as one celebrates some cheerful event. But it is a 'celebration' nonetheless... because we know him to be risen* (p. 53). Of course, John's Passion is paramount on this day, but the first reading about the suffering servant should emerge *from the barely broken silence like a trumpet blast* (p. 56) because exaltation and vindication easily trump the suffering. The psalm of the day evokes *Christ Jesus himself who is praying in the person of the psalmist* (p. 59) and *Jesus' persistence in hope is meant to become our own* (p. 60). I learned that the words *I thirst* in the Passion narrative link up *with the words of Jesus heard earlier in the gospel when he told the Samaritan woman at the well that he was thirsty* (p. 66). Jesus is literally dying to give us this living water.

The Easter Vigil liturgy takes place during the night *because the resurrection itself occurred in the night and ... the dawn of Easter morning simply reveals that something had already happened during the night* (p. 84). For this year of Mark, Driscoll's remark on Mark's shorter, blunter ending to his Gospel is pertinent. Mark says that the women fled from the tomb in fear and told nobody anything! *Like the women, we have every right to be 'utterly amazed' and afraid when we find in the place of death the completely unexpected announcement of life... [But] eventually too they told: they bore witness to the empty tomb, to the mysterious explainer of its meaning, and to their dumbfounded first reaction* (p. 100). The 'mysterious explainer' refers to Mark's angel, the young man dressed in white at the tomb. The women's faith trajectory from grief to joyful sharing should hearten all of us slow learners!

The Gospel of Easter Day focuses on Mary of Magdala finding the stone rolled

away from the tomb's entrance. Again a link with John 4. *As the Samaritan woman had run off to tell the people of the village about the man she met at the well, Mary runs off to tell the disciples that she had found an open tomb. The tomb is to become a spring of life-giving water* (p. 109). Driscoll comments on the burial cloths, linking them with the story of Lazarus' liberation and that of Adam and Eve who covered the shame of their sin. *In the night [Jesus] had taken up [his life] again, and he leaves behind him the garments and the shame of death* (p. 111).

Doubting Thomas arrives on the second Sunday of Easter. Driscoll focusses on the Eucharist as our participation in the Easter mystery. *By means of the Eucharist and our communion in it, we can do the very thing that Thomas did. We too can touch the Body of the Lord, the body which was crucified for us and which is now risen and present to us. We are not unbelieving, but believing. We receive him praying, 'My Lord and my God!'* (p. 120).

Ascension is a hard feast to get inside since the Gospels often conflate cross and glorification at Calvary itself. The key text for Ascension is from the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles, in which 'two men in white' tell the apostles to stop gawking at the clouds. Driscoll makes two interesting observations: *It is the very Moses and Elijah, the men who stood with Jesus at his transfiguration, who also stood in the tomb on Easter morning... who [now stand] beside the disciples as they intently watched Jesus' own exodus, his being taken up in glory. As Elisha saw Elijah taken up and was given a share of his spirit, so now the disciples, looking so intently, see Jesus taken up and are guaranteed a share in his Holy Spirit* (p. 126).

This is an excellent book for both preachers and those wanting to depth their wonder at the central mystery of our faith. Get a copy now for the rest of the Easter season and to prepare for a more profound celebration of Easter next year.







# Liturgy NEWS

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