

Liturgy

N E W S

VOLUME 51 / 3

SPRING

SEPTEMBER 2021

The
HOLY SPIRIT
makes sacred Scripture
the living word of God.
(Aperuit Illis 9)



HUMAN WORDS
BECOME GOD'S WORD

IN THIS ISSUE

- [EDITOR: ACCOMPANIMENT](#) ■ [IT'S NOT JUST THE PRIEST: PASTORAL COLLABORATION](#) ■ [CELEBRATING THE TRADITIONAL MASS](#)
- [GLIMMERS OF GRACE: FUNERALS ON THE FRINGES](#)
- [SCHOOL GRADUATION](#) ■ [MUSIC: THE COMMUNION SONG](#) ■ [BOOKS](#)
- [AND ALL THE LATEST LITURGY NEWS](#)

ACCOMPANIMENT

Je te prends par la main

We will soon be facing a difficult and delicate pastoral-liturgical challenge across Australia. It relates to sacraments and the pastoral care of Catholics who are opting for Voluntary Assisted Dying.

VAD legislation has now been passed and is being implemented in Victoria, Western Australia, Tasmania, South Australia and Queensland. New South Wales will not be far behind. Over several decades, lobby groups have been very active in promoting the option of euthanasia in Australia. Needless to say, it is opposed by the Catholic Church (and the Australian Medical Association, among others).

The liturgical question is whether and in what circumstances we may celebrate the sacraments of Penance, Anointing and Viaticum with those who are choosing VAD and whether and how we may celebrate a Catholic funeral for them. The pastoral care process would involve the patient in discussion of alternatives to VAD and options for palliative care. The Church's minister would advocate the sacredness of human life and trust in God's providence, with both the person and the family. But how do the sacraments fit in?

The starting point for the Canadian bishops of Alberta and the north-west (*Vademecum for Priests and Parishes*, 2016) is that euthanasia is never morally justified and that the Church cannot concur or cooperate in

any way with an evil act. For the sacrament of Penance, the penitent should manifest contrition, confession and repentance. To one who has requested death under the law, it should be explained that this is a grave moral evil and, if the person continues on this course of action, absolution cannot be given. Only if the person is open to reconsidering the decision, may the sacrament proceed. Likewise for the Anointing of the Sick, 'obstinate persistence in manifest serious sin' precludes the celebration of the sacrament. For a person who has become unconscious, the priest would not presume repentance unless some sign had been given first. Curiously there is no consideration of Viaticum.

For each of the sacraments, the bishops analyse the situation of the patient. Is it a situation of indecision or of a determination to proceed? In the second case, is it a manifest determination or a private determination? In each of these, is it a situation of remote enactment of decision or proximate enactment of decision? The overriding aim is to persuade the person to change their mind.

These Canadian bishops acknowledge that the Church does celebrate funerals for those who died by suicide (there are specific prayers for this in the rite), but they suggest that, if the funeral rite became 'an occasion to celebrate the decision to die by assisted suicide', it should be 'gently but firmly denied'. This is a real danger in Australia given the common aberration of extensive eulogy. 'Celebrating the life of the deceased' needs to be carefully monitored and circumscribed to ensure that the person's heroic embrace of a terminal illness does not glorify or approve of VAD in any way.

In their pastoral letter of 2018, the Canadian bishops on the east coast emphasise the pastoral dimension a little more, recognising that this is a highly complex and intensely

emotional issue. Those opting for VAD, they say, deserve our understanding, respect for their point of view, and a compassionate pastoral response. Pastoral care in difficult situations involves listening closely and accompanying those who are suffering. It is a ministry of healing, guiding, nurturing and reconciling. Our faith in the resurrection affirms that death is not the last word on Christian life. No one should ever be denied the grace of the sacraments whenever there is faith, hope, and an openness to an acceptance of the gift of life. Even when a person's resolute determination makes the sacraments impossible, say the bishops, we can never abandon them. The Church is called to accompany those considering VAD with dialogue and compassionate prayerful support.

In July 2020, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith released *Samaritanus Bonus*, a comprehensive letter on the care of persons in the critical and terminal phases of life. As one would expect, the document makes a strong case against euthanasia and assisted suicide: they are always the wrong choice. *When a request for euthanasia rises from anguish and despair, although in these cases the guilt of the individual may be reduced, or completely absent, nevertheless the error of judgement into which the conscience falls, perhaps in good faith, does not change the nature of this act of killing, which will always be in itself something to be rejected. The same applies to assisted suicide... Experience confirms that the pleas of gravely ill people who sometimes ask for death are not to be understood as implying a true desire for euthanasia; in fact, it is almost always a case of an anguished plea for help and love.* When it comes to the sacraments for those who have requested death, the Congregation affirms the necessity to remain close to the person in a willingness to listen

and help, but *we find ourselves before a person who, whatever their subjective dispositions may be, has decided upon a gravely immoral act and willingly persists in this decision*. This involves a manifest absence of the proper disposition for the reception of the sacraments.

For the Swiss bishops (2019), the starting point is to understand why a person would choose VAD: fear of suffering, the burden of treatments, loneliness, a feeling of being useless or a burden on others, loss of dignity... The desire for death most often expresses a vulnerability on the part of the sick person. The best way to set the person on a new course is by love and solidarity. Ecclesial accompaniment, undertaken with delicacy and respect under the tender and merciful care of God, engages with the desire for death in hope of transforming it into a desire for life. While making it clear that no sincere intention or circumstance can change or justify a bad act, the pastoral carer should accompany the person 'as far as possible'. The pastor should physically leave the room at the actual moment of the act of euthanasia, not to signify abandonment, but to make it clear to all that there is no cooperation or acceptance of the act. After it is done, however, the minister may decide to return to the patient's side for the period (an average of 25 minutes) before death occurs. A decision about the sacraments requires careful discernment, not only of the circumstances, but also of the person's interior attitude. If the decision is reached that the sacraments are not appropriate, it should never be seen as a punishment, nor as the rigid application of a rule, but a stance in favour of life which in turn affirms God's love for each of us. It is never the end of the relationship of accompaniment. Moreover, the ministry of prayerful empathy extends to the sick person's family and friends.

The Belgian bishops (*Je te prends par la main*, 2019) offer a beautiful meditation on death as a profound transition in human existence and celebrate the possibilities of being present through good palliative care. Their letter is meant to encourage pastoral ministers never to abandon a person, no matter what happens. This is an art. They rightly point out that the sacraments of Penance and Anointing, sacraments of healing, are not meant for the time of death but for a much earlier stage in a terminal illness. Most important is to hear the real question behind the request for death. When and why does suffering become intolerable? What happens between raising the issue of euthanasia, requesting it, and passing on to the act? Here the ministry of pastoral accompaniment enters, without judgement and with a profound respect, working collaboratively with family and friends, doctors and carers.

When a person moves through to the act itself – a decision in conscience which cannot be supported by the Church's minister – the pastor nevertheless remains by the person's side. Powerless and overwhelmed, the pastor is called to suffer, as indeed do the family and friends. Being with a dying person is very intense, difficult, and very beautiful. Fear, anger, helplessness and sadness are mixed with affection, hope, gratitude, acceptance and faith. We suffer with Christ; we rise with Christ. The witness of the pastor is that nothing can come between us and the love of God, made visible in Christ (Rom 8:38-39).

The issues raised by these episcopal statements are important and difficult.

We can see a graduated approach as we read through them. I can understand the clarity of the Canadian arguments, but I am much more challenged by the ambiguity of the Belgian positions. Certainly we have to be clear where we stand on VAD, but pastorally and liturgically this may not be the most important thing to focus on at the bedside. With all of the positive spin put on assisted dying and given the large number of Australians who support it as something caring and good, it is not surprising that some Catholics will in conscience decide that it is a legitimate option for them at the end. The bishop of Honolulu recently wrote that when someone says, 'I am at peace with my decision', it may simply indicate an inflexibility to

reconsider. I do not think this is good enough. Whether we agree with it or not, we need to respect a person's final decision in conscience. For a person in good conscience who requests it,

communion as Viaticum is an assurance that Christ is always near to us, imperfect though we be, and that God's love is sheer unmerited gift.

Christ really did die on Good Friday, and hope was extinguished. Between Good Friday and Easter, a long silence reigns. Then, in the obscurity of Easter night, at the heart of the most profound suffering, the love of God is reborn, stronger than death, and a passage is opened up to fullness of life. (Based on the final pages of *Je te prends par la main*.)



A blue ink signature, likely belonging to the author of the text.

IT'S NOT JUST THE PRIEST!

PASTORAL COLLABORATION BETWEEN PRIEST AND PEOPLE IN PREPARING LITURGY

by Anthony Doran

As a child, I was always highly amused by cartoons which featured the one-man band – you know the one: a bass drum on his back, guitar in hand, harmonica around his neck, and cymbals between the knees... one person playing all those instruments together. I didn't know much about music at the time, but I did wonder how one person could make all those components work. Not surprisingly, when I heard the sound generated by the one-man band, it was noise and not music.

Sadly, when it comes to preparing liturgy, the priest as something of a one-man band has become a reality in many Australian parishes. We regularly lose the pastoral collaboration between priest and people when it comes to liturgy preparation. There are many reasons for this.

Recent years have seen a huge increase in the number of priests ministering in our parishes who come from cultures which elevate the position of the priest in the community, often at the cost of the involvement of lay people. Some of these priests are simply not used to working collaboratively with lay people. There has also been a rise in the number of newly-ordained local clergy who resist the opportunity to work collaboratively with lay people.

But every coin has two sides. Another factor is the increasing number of parishioners who are time poor. They often do not have the 'spare' time to contribute to working for their parish community.

Some parishes find that their lay ministers are an aging workforce. When they started volunteering in the 1970s, little did they think they would still be doing the same work in their parish 50 years later because the next generation of volunteers simply did not materialise. They have continued to minister and contribute, but they are tired and sometimes give up.

The pandemic restrictions and lockdowns have added to the woes, not only making ministry more difficult but also affecting the life of the Church and diminishing our parish communities.



Some parish ministers also find the ongoing compliance requirements of safeguarding children a burden and even a bar to their continued participation in the liturgical life of their parish.

In addition, we have an increasing number of parishioners who see the liturgical life of the parish as the job of the priest. It is not uncommon when a parishioner is asked to consider becoming a member of the liturgy committee to be told that they could not possibly do that – *I'm not worthy / holy enough* or more bluntly *Liturgy is your job, Father*. Some see themselves as consumers not participants.

Another reality of the modern Australian parish is that more and more communities are being cared for by fewer and fewer priests. The pastors find it simpler to have one liturgy across all the places of their ministry. Rather than coordinate various community representatives, it becomes easier for them to prepare what they need themselves. The parish office looks after the rosters... so it's just more efficient, isn't it? No. Preparing the liturgy is not about an efficient use of time. It is about letting go and entering another dimension of time, the *kairos*. This is clear when we participate in an eastern liturgy and western notions of efficiency are radically readjusted.

Understanding Liturgy and Ecclesiology

The various liturgical rites which communities celebrate in their worship and the ways in which they prepare these rites will always reflect the self-understanding of a particular community. There is a very real dynamic between worship and ecclesiology. The way we prepare and celebrate our liturgies will give expression to our understanding of ourselves as Church. So, if the one-man band approach has become the way things are done in a parish community – especially in regard to the liturgy – then the message which the priest or community displays is that the Church is synonymous with the priest. This is not an authentic Catholic understanding of Church.

The Fathers of the Vatican Council II spent many sessions debating the nature of the Church, which resulted in a number of descriptions or models of the Church, for example, Body of Christ and Bride of Christ. Perhaps the most fundamental description was to identify the Church as the People of God (*Lumen Gentium*, 9-17). By defining the Church in this way, Vatican II was restoring the balance. Whereas in the past the hierarchical and institutional aspect of the Church was emphasised, now these elements are placed within a renewed understanding of the communal nature of the Church. All the baptised make up the Body of Christ. It is only after this global affirmation that *Lumen Gentium* goes on to discuss the various ‘parts’ of the People of God, namely the hierarchy (bishops, priests and deacons) and the laity. If this is who we are as the Church, then the way in which we prepare and celebrate our liturgies should reflect that reality.

Collaboration between the priest and people is therefore more than just easing the burden for the priest. It is nothing more and nothing less than the baptised faithful taking their rightful place in the Church. For at Baptism we are anointed with the oil of sacred chrism: *As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet and King, so may you live as a member of his body, sharing everlasting life* (RB 144, also RCIA 434). All the baptised members of the Church share in the priestly, prophetic and royal dignity of Christ. The primary sacrament in the Church is Baptism, not Holy Orders! Surely, this must lead us to see that collaboration between priests and people is not an optional extra but an essential expression of the nature of the Church.

There are also very practical reasons for establishing or re-establishing collaboration between priest and people. Take a moment to think about some of the elements which contribute to good liturgy in a parish:

- ◆ effective and well-trained liturgical ministers,
- ◆ vibrant and dynamic music ministry,
- ◆ engaging art and environment,
- ◆ prudent and sensitive child safety

No one person can manage all of this on their own. As gifted and hard-working as they may be, no one person (priest or lay) can be an expert in every field of liturgical ministry.

Increasingly, our parishes are blessed with parishioners who have qualifications in theology, scripture, liturgy and music. These are the very people who should be empowered for preparing the liturgy in collaboration with the pastor for the good of the whole community. Indeed, they could well be entrusted with coordinating roles for their particular ministry; they are the ones who empower their sisters and brothers for the work of liturgical ministry. It is good to recognise these ministry leaders formally and liturgically to indicate that their work is not for themselves but for the good of all. (See Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Celebrations of Installation and Recognition*).

Parishes are also blessed with parishioners who have faithfully been a part of their local community for many years. They will remain part of the community long after the current pastor moves on. Priests are sometimes heard to speak of ‘my parish’ but pastors make a mistake when they overlook the people who constitute the parish. It is their place; they know the story – let the Church honour what they have to contribute.

Some Strategies

How might a priest and the people of his community begin to work collaboratively together to prepare liturgy? Both liturgical ministers and the priest are time poor; there are increasing demands on all of us. But we also know that anything which is good and worthwhile takes time and effort and liturgy is no different. Time, effort and good will are required to make this collaboration work.

Thankfully, the Catholic Church has already put most of the effort into preparing our liturgies: prayers, readings and the outlines of each season have been already chosen in the Missal, Lectionary and Ritual Books. The task for people and priest is to take all this and situate these elements in the context of the local worshipping community. This process takes account of local needs, so that the liturgies which are prepared and celebrated may speak to the situation of the community and the lives of its people.

- ◆ Sessions to prepare liturgy collaboratively should have an agenda which is not too crowded. Aim to prepare just one liturgical season such as Lent (the Sacred Paschal Triduum requires its own preparation session).
- ◆ These preparation sessions should be minuted so that action items are clearly recorded. It is frustrating not to know who is responsible for what by the end of the meeting: collaboration implies accountability. Agendas and minutes lend a degree of professionalism which many of our lay colleagues expect these days.
- ◆ The pastor, any assistant priests, and the co-ordinators of the readers, musicians, sacristans, and art and environment ministers should meet to prepare well ahead of time. It is almost pointless preparing for Lent the week before Ash Wednesday.

◆ A useful starting point for a preparation session could be to look at the readings for a particular season. What themes emerge? What images are repeated? What aspects of the scriptural journey does our community want to emphasise? What challenge is there for our community during this season?

◆ When the answers to these questions are teased out a little further, a plan of action for each ministry begins to take shape. Perhaps the music ministers want to learn a new setting of a common responsorial psalm. Perhaps the readers will want to do some background work on a forthcoming series of readings from Isaiah in Advent. Masses of white flowers at Easter to emphasise the abundance of new life (in contrast to Good Friday austerity) will need the specific attention of ministers of art and environment.

◆ This sort of preparation might work best over a couple of hours, almost like a morning of retreat, rather than a more perfunctory one-hour meeting. Because they take more time, you might have fewer of these meetings a year but they will be more effective. We need to work smarter, not harder.

What is suggested above is simply one way of proceeding. It has the extra benefit of fostering a liturgical spirituality in liturgical ministers. Ultimately, each community needs to find its own rhythm and way of working.

Conclusion

The benefits of a priest and people working collaboratively to prepare the liturgy should not be underestimated. A previous parish in which I was pastor initiated a program of scripture study. While it was not the original intention, I ended up becoming part of each discussion group. So I was meeting four times each week with different groups of parishioners to discuss the Sunday Gospel. I never failed to come away with fresh insights into these texts which I have been reading all my life; I thought I knew all there was to know. Other people can enable us to see and understand something very familiar in new and fresh ways. This is certainly true for collaboration on liturgical preparation.

Some priests fear that the involvement of lay people will diminish the authority of their leadership in the parish. The opposite is true. The pastor who can effectively collaborate with others and empower them for ministry exercises true leadership. He is able to build a community where all the baptised can be part of Christ's work. By exercising liturgical ministry together, they help build up the Kingdom of God and enable other parishioners to experience the Risen Christ in their lives. In this way, we avoid the 'noise' generated by a one-man band and instead sing together a new song of praise for the Lord.

■ Anthony Doran, Parish Priest of Strathmore in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, is a member of the international Societas Liturgica.

OUR COVER

Aperuit Illis is a beautiful letter from Pope Francis on Scripture as the Word of God. Here we highlight the role of the Holy Spirit (AI 9).



“Sacred Scripture, by the working of the Holy Spirit, makes human words written in human fashion become the word of God. The role of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures is primordial. Without the work of the Spirit, there would always be a risk of remaining limited to the written text alone. This would open the way to a fundamentalist reading, which needs to be avoided, lest we betray the inspired, dynamic and spiritual character of the sacred text. As the Apostle reminds us: *The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life* (2 Cor 3:6). The Holy Spirit, then, makes sacred Scripture the living word of God, experienced and handed down in the faith of his holy people.”

CELEBRATING THE TRADITIONAL MASS

by Tom Elich

It gives us great joy to celebrate the Mass in the ancient tradition of the Roman Rite, the Mass that has nourished Christian communities for centuries, that is, the liturgy as reformed by mandate of the Second Vatican Council sixty years ago.

The liturgy is made up of immutable elements, divinely instituted, and of elements subject to change. These not only may but ought to be changed with the passage of time if they have suffered from the intrusion of anything out of harmony with the inner nature of the liturgy or have become unsuited to it. In this restoration, both texts and rites should be so drawn up that they express more clearly the holy things they signify and that the Christian people, as far as possible, be enabled to understand them with ease and to take part in the rites fully, actively, and as befits a community (SC 21).

Pope Francis has once again affirmed that this reformed liturgy is 'the unique expression of the *lex orandi* of the Roman Rite' (*Traditionis Custodes*, 2021). He made his statement 'in order to promote the concord and unity of the Church'. None of this is new. It has been there in black and white in the Missal for over half a century. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal points out that the words used by Vatican II on the restoration of the Order of Mass are the same words used by Pius V in promulgating the Missal of Trent in 1570. *From the fact that the same words are used, it can be noted how the two Roman Missals, although four centuries have intervened, embrace one and the same tradition. Furthermore, if the inner elements of this tradition are reflected upon, it is also understood how outstandingly and felicitously the older Roman Missal is brought to fulfilment in the later one (GIRM 6).*

POPES JOHN PAUL II AND BENEDICT XVI

The concern for unity and concord in liturgical celebrations also motivated Francis' predecessors. Both John Paul II and Benedict XVI were desperate to reconcile the adherents of the schismatic 'Lefebvrist' Society of St Pius X who not only insist on using the Tridentine Mass but who also reject Vatican Council teaching, notably on ecumenism and religious liberty. The popes left no stone unturned in pursuing their aim.

As early as 1984, John Paul II recognised that there were a few who were attached to the old Latin forms of the Mass. He granted an indult for specific groups who requested it from their bishop giving permission to use

the Roman Missal of 1962 – on specified days and not in parish churches – provided it was 'publicly clear beyond all ambiguity' that they were not calling into question the reformed liturgy. When Archbishop Lefebvre illicitly ordained another bishop in 1988, the pope intensified his efforts at reconciliation. He urged 'a wide and generous application' of the 1984 concession. He also established a commission, *Ecclesia Dei*, to work to this end. In fact, this commission found a number of supporters among curial cardinals and it became an active promoter of the Tridentine Mass.

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, had been very much involved with *Ecclesia Dei* and attempts to reconcile the Society of Pius X. When he was elected pope in April 2005, he made this work a priority. In 2007, he issued *Summorum Pontificum*, a document which changed the landscape entirely. This document maintained that the earlier Missal was 'never abrogated', despite the statements of Paul VI who, in promulgating the revised Missal, stated most clearly that he was doing for the twentieth century exactly what Pius V had done for the Church in the sixteenth century. *We decree, he wrote, that these laws and prescriptions be firm and effective now and in the future, notwithstanding, to the extent necessary, the apostolic constitutions and ordinances issued by our predecessors and other prescriptions, even those deserving particular mention and derogation.*

The assertion that the Missal of Trent was never abrogated opened the way for an unprecedented innovation. Benedict declared that the reformed Missal was the 'ordinary expression of the *lex orandi*' and that the Tridentine Missal was the 'extraordinary expression of the same *lex orandi*'. Thus he established two usages of the one Roman Rite. Benedict XVI then went on to rule that any Catholic priest, on any day, may use either the Missal of John XXIII or the Missal of Paul VI without any permission either of the Holy See or his own bishop. People were free to attend, and groups in parishes who desired the Tridentine Mass were to be accommodated and integrated into parish life. Furthermore the extraordinary form was to extend to the celebration of all the sacraments, funerals and other celebrations. Benedict XVI's accompanying letter spelled out the context, namely, the attempt to reconcile the Society of Pius X. He indicated that he did not think that his new provisions would lead to disarray or divisions in the Christian community, but rather that the twofold use would be mutually enriching.

POPE FRANCIS AND TRADITIONIS CUSTODES

All these provisions made no difference whatsoever to a rapprochement with the Society of Pius X but instead became a rallying point for groups within the Church who oppose the reforms of the Second Vatican Council and the papacy of Francis. Francis has solidly worked to reinvigorate the vision of Vatican II; talk of the 'reform of the reform', once common under Benedict, has faded. Francis suppressed the commission *Ecclesia Dei* early in 2019, merging its functions with those of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. At Easter time in 2021, he limited the number of private Masses celebrated in St Peter's Basilica and circumscribed the use of the 'extraordinary form'. But most importantly, during 2020, he held a consultation with the bishops of the world on the experience of using the 'extraordinary form'.

Pope Francis summarises the situation without pulling any punches! *Regrettably, the pastoral objective of my predecessors, who had intended 'to do everything possible to ensure that all those who truly possessed the desire for unity would find it possible to remain in this unity or discover it anew', has often been seriously disregarded. The opportunity offered... was exploited to widen the gaps, reinforce divergences, and encourage disagreements that injure the Church, block her path, and expose her to the perils of division.* The instrumental use of the *Missale Romanum* of 1962 is often characterised, he notes, by a rejection not only of the liturgical reform but also of the Vatican Council II itself, claiming that it has betrayed the Tradition and the 'true Church'.

Francis affirms that principles such as full, conscious and active participation of the whole People of God in the liturgy are not negotiable. Liturgical celebrations are not the private actions of a particular group, but celebrations of the whole Church which is the sacrament of unity (SC 26). All who are attached to the authentic tradition of the Church will find it in the revised liturgical books of the Roman Rite. Thus *Traditionis Custodes* (2021) overturns entirely the provisions of *Summorum Pontificum* (2007).

- ◆ The liturgical books reformed by the Vatican Council are the unique expression of the *lex orandi* of the Roman Rite.
- ◆ The diocesan bishop is reinstated as the moderator, promoter and guardian of the liturgical life of the Church and therefore has exclusive competence to authorise the use of the 1962 Missal.
- ◆ The bishop is to determine that groups who use this Missal do not deny the validity and legitimacy of the liturgical reform; he is to evaluate parishes erected canonically for these groups and determine whether or not to retain them.
- ◆ The bishop is to designate one or more locations where the rite may be celebrated – but not in parish churches and not by erecting new personal parishes – and is to establish the days on which the celebrations are permitted.
- ◆ For the celebration of these Masses, the bishop is to appoint a priest with a good knowledge of Latin and the historical forms of the liturgy; scripture readings, however, are to be proclaimed in the vernacular.

◆ The bishop is to take care not to authorise the establishment of new groups who use the Missal of 1962.

◆ Any priest ordained in future who wishes to use the Missal of 1962 must submit a formal request to the diocesan bishop who in turn should consult the Holy See. Priests already celebrating in this way should request authorisation to continue.

◆ Finally the pope promulgates his 'firm decision': *Previous norms, instructions, permissions, and customs that do not conform to the provisions of the present Motu Proprio are abrogated. Everything that I have declared in this Apostolic Letter... I order to be observed in all its parts, anything else to the contrary notwithstanding, even if worthy of particular mention...*

Pope Francis' accompanying letter to his brother bishops urges them to 'proceed in such a way as to return to a unitary form of celebration'. Firstly, he encourages them to provide for the good of those who have been celebrating the old rites but who need to return in due time to the reformed rites; secondly, he asks them to discontinue the erection of new personal parishes, that is, any expansion of opportunities for the old rites.

CONCLUSION

It is a great relief for mainstream Catholics to have the regular liturgy of the Mass and sacraments affirmed as the only authentic embodiment of the Church's tradition in worship. For too long, adherents of the '*usus antiquior*' have patronisingly dismissed the reformed rites as a '*novus ordo*', while claiming that they themselves hold the authentic tradition.

Now Ordinary and Extraordinary Forms of the Roman Rite no longer exist. The one liturgy, with all its joyous adaptation to different countries and cultures, is the sign of unity and diversity in the Body of Christ.

The reaction of media and the noisy blogosphere, of course, has been vociferous. Even cardinals and bishops have joined in. Other voices have been more moderate, perhaps sad and puzzled. Melbourne's Bishop Peter Elliott, who affirmed that he celebrates the reformed Mass daily, speaks for this constituency: *Having received copies of a flood of anguished letters protesting about the severe papal ruling, I hear not only their pain but moving arguments explaining their love for the stately old rite, its attractive silence and engaging spirituality... They certainly are not divisive extremists, aggressive cranks or nostalgic old folk.* Pastoral provisions allowing for these people to celebrate the old Latin will continue. Perhaps the best pastoral response, however, will be to offer opportunities for them to understand the Vatican Council II reforms and to experience the liturgy in its power – experiences which draw people into profound silence, which catch people up in the mystery of strongly made sacramental signs, which move the heart by the beauty and dignity of music and gesture. We've been working at this for over sixty years. Clearly the task is not yet finished.

■ Rev Dr Tom Elich is director of Liturgy Brisbane.

TRADITIONIS CUSTODES

In his Apostolic Letter *Traditionis Custodes* of 16 July 2021, Pope Francis has reversed the provisions of Pope Benedict XVI's letter *Summorum Pontificum* of 7 July 2007 concerning the use of the Tridentine Mass. It brings to an end the existence of an 'extraordinary form' of the Roman Rite and restores the role of the local bishop as the one who regulates the celebration of this liturgy. The pope urges bishops to encourage a return to the reformed liturgy as 'the unique expression of the *lex orandi* of the Roman Rite' for the sake of the concord and unity of the Church.

The new rulings are the result of a consultation among the bishops of the world which revealed that the introduction of the old Latin Mass has led to serious divisions in parishes and the spread of 'toxic fundamentalist ideologies'. This is very pronounced in the USA but also occurs in France, the UK and other places. In some parishes, mainstream Catholics have been marginalised in their own communities.

In an August 2021 interview, Pope Francis commented on the consultation which led to the new dispensation. *The concern that appeared the most was that something which was done to help pastorally those who had lived a previous experience was being transformed into an ideology. That is, from a pastoral thing to ideology. So we had to react with clear norms.*

Predictably, those who have made the Tridentine Mass the banner under which they oppose Pope Francis and the renewal of the Church have called it a 'declaration of war' and 'act of intolerance'. The more moderate have expressed their anguish, saying they are disheartened and anxious. Others in the Church have expressed their joy and relief that, at last, the divisive provisions for unfettered promotion and celebration of the old liturgy are at an end.

One commentator said Pope Francis' decision marked 'An historic day. A bold move. A prophetic act.'

Bishops' reactions have varied. Townsville's Bishop Tim Harris immediately entered into dialogue with the Traditional Latin Mass community to draw up a new memorandum of understanding. Bishop Columba Macbeth-Green of Wilcannia-Forbes announced that the current arrangements for three Latin Mass communities at different ends of the diocese would remain unchanged. Sydney's Archbishop Anthony Fisher extended permissions on a temporary basis while he considers the implementation of the new provisions; in this archdiocese, there are several places where the old Latin Mass is regularly celebrated, including the cathedral and the parish administered by the priestly Fraternity of St Peter (FSP) who use the old rite exclusively.

In France, the bishops have worked hard over the years to respect the faith of those groups who celebrate with the 1962 Missal and to maintain good relations with them. There have been some issues. The diocese of Dijon had occasion in June to close the ministry of the FSP after more than twenty years because its priests were refusing to concelebrate in diocesan liturgies such as the Chrism Mass – concelebration was taken as a basic expression of ecclesial communion. In France, those who celebrate the old Latin Mass are organised into a dozen different 'institutes', including a number of monasteries, the FSP and the Institute of the Good Shepherd (which originated with a group of priests who returned from the Society of Pius X into communion with Rome). These communities asked the bishops to appoint a 'mediator' to facilitate a 'humane, personal, trusting dialogue, far from ideologies or the coldness of administrative decrees'. The petition adds, 'we are ready to convert if a partisan spirit or pride has polluted our hearts... to ask forgiveness if some excess of language or mistrust of authority may have crept into any of our members'. In Paris, Archbishop Michel Aupetit noted that the 1962 Missal has been used in a dozen churches in the archdiocese, with priests in these places not using the old Latin rite exclusively but in conjunction with the reformed rite. He has reduced this to five churches, with priests who celebrate the 1962 rite requiring written permission; these Masses will be celebrated with the Scripture readings in French.

Church historian and theology professor from Philadelphia, Massimo Faggioli (*below*), wrote in *Commonweal Magazine* (2 Sept 2021) that this is not about the liturgy alone but about the theology of Vatican II. In fact, he said, *Traditionis Custodes* represents one of the most important papal acts in the history of the reception and implementation of Vatican II. It cannot be just returning to the situation pre-2007: such a return is impossible. *The rise of social media has helped nurture a post-modern, media-savvy, resentful traditionalism that plays out in the undermining of this papacy both by prominent conservative laypeople and by clergy...*



In addition, *since March 2020, the celebration of the liturgy for many Catholics has taken place through the computer screen. This affects how we see the link between liturgy and ecclesiology. COVID-time Mass has increased... the distance from the altar and within the pews... [and led to] a drastic reduction in, if not a redefinition of, active participation.* Faggioli argues that the reception of Vatican II and its liturgical reforms is at the centre of the current crisis. *It's time to take up the theological meaning of the documents of Vatican II and the magisterial significance of the conciliar event. The Catholic Church is called to begin again... – in the seminaries, in the parishes, in academia – to undertake a process of the reception of the theology of Vatican II that puts aside generational rifts, and fills the gaps in conciliar teaching. We can do that by building on the very basis of the tradition dynamically understood, as opposed to 'tradition' that emphasises contrast, conflict and conquest.*



GUIDO MARINI

The familiar face of Mgr Guido Marini, seen beside the pope at official liturgies for fourteen years, will now become much less prominent. The Papal Master of Ceremonies is being ordained Bishop of Tortona, near to his home diocese of Genoa in northern Italy. Though at heart a rubricist with a conservative viewpoint, the fifty-six year old has served the liturgy professionally and with dignity under two very different popes. In 2019, he was also given responsibility for the Sistine Chapel Choir.



Marini spoke of his time in Rome as 'beautiful and very grace-filled years'. He said that in this appointment, this turning of the page, the story of God in his life continues in a new way in the Diocese of Tortona. He said *it is important first to enter into the life of the local Church, listen to the Holy Spirit, and then lead with docility.*

His predecessor in Tortona, Archbishop Vittorio Viola OFM, has been appointed secretary at the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. We await a new appointment for papal MC.

YEAR OF ST JOSEPH

The Year of St Joseph will end on 8 December 2021. This beautiful sculpture (look at Jesus standing on his tippy-toes to reach up to Joseph's embrace) is at Stuartholme College in Brisbane. In *Patris Corde*, Pope Francis spoke of Joseph as a 'tender and loving father': *As the Lord had done with Israel, so Joseph did with Jesus – he taught him to walk, taking him by the hand; he was for him like a father who raises an infant to his cheeks, bending down to him and feeding him* (Hosea 11:3-4).



Have you seen our new online courses which will help you to prepare and support lay readers and communion ministers? It is really hard for parishes to gather their ministers together for training sessions. Not only do current lockdowns make it impossible, but people's busy schedules are always a major challenge. Now lay liturgical ministers can do the courses at their own pace, in their own time, in their own home. Videos, reading material, reflections and quizzes make the process interesting and, at the end, a certificate shows that the course has been completed.

For city suburbs or remote country communities, this is a cost-effective and accessible way for parishes to support new and existing ministers. There is a basic module on liturgy and ministry, and then two further modules, one for readers, the other for lay communion ministers. Each module offers about 3 hours of content.

If you're in lockdown, use the time productively!

Ministers of the Word package \$18.

Lay Ministers of Communion package \$18.

Combined Word and Communion \$25.

Parishes can purchase pre-paid vouchers in bundles to distribute to ministers – 20% discount.

Purchase online at www.liturgybrisbane.net.au.

SCHOOL OF PREACHING

In a joint project between ACU and the Archdiocese of Canberra Goulburn, a pilot program of the Xavier School of Preaching was held on the first weekend in July this year. The intensive was designed not just for priests and deacons but also for parish lay ministers, teachers and school leaders, youth ministers and other key people in the Church. Using face-to-face learning and online resources, the course tackled topics such as proclamation and encounter, contemplation and communication, as well as the mechanics of public speaking. It engaged participants not just in giving a homily at Mass but in a variety of contexts: public preaching, catechesis and testimonies.

CHRISTMAS ON SATURDAY

It is always a challenge for parishes when Christmas falls on a Saturday as it does this year in 2021.

The Masses on Christmas Eve and Christmas morning take place as usual on Friday evening and Saturday morning.

If a Mass is held on Saturday evening, it is also a Christmas Mass and not the first Mass of the Sunday. Sunday of the Holy Family is commemorated only on the day itself.

SYRO-MALABAR CHURCH

A long-running liturgical dispute in India's Eastern-rite Syro-Malabar Catholic Church has still not been resolved, despite a synod ruling in August 2021 trying to enforce a 1999 agreement which has never been fully implemented. This was yet another attempt to achieve a uniform mode of celebration of the Mass across all 35 dioceses. The issue will be familiar to Catholics of the Roman Rite.



Six decades ago, many Syro-Malabar parishes began celebrating the liturgy facing the people. With a liturgical reform four decades ago, some communities emerged who desired to restore the original 'ad orientem' arrangement where priest and people face the east. The compromise reached in 1999 was that the priest should face the people except during the Eucharistic Prayer when he would turn to face the altar. Many felt this was a backward step and did not accept it. In July, Pope Francis urged them to accept the ruling for the sake of stability and ecclesial communion. Now however a large group of priests is seeking an exemption because the uniform arrangement is 'against the will of the people' who have had no other experience of the eucharistic liturgy. They are arguing for unity in diversity rather than uniformity.

IN MEMORIAM



ANNE MCMILLAN RSM died on 8 September 2021 at the age of 82. Armed with an MA in liturgy from Notre Dame, USA, she was for thirty years the liturgy coordinator for the Diocese of Ballarat until her retirement in 2013. She was a prominent and well-known participant at national liturgy gatherings. Her contributions cover liturgical music (consultant for *Gather Australia* and a diocesan music collection) and the visual arts (consultant for the refurbishment of St Patrick's Cathedral in Ballarat as well as the design of websites and printed resources). She will be remembered above all for her commitment to the liturgical education of adults and their formation as leaders. She prepared extensive resources to meet the needs of rural and remote communities and, in pioneering lay-led Sunday assemblies in these places, promoted a sense of collaboration between all the baptised, clergy and lay.



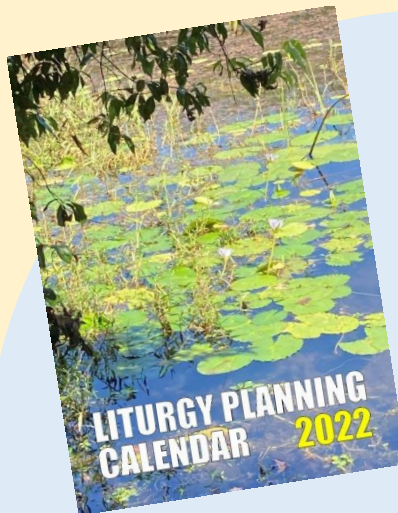
JAMES LEACHMAN OSB (1947-2021) was a priest and monk of Ealing Abbey in London who helped establish the Institutum Liturgicum at the abbey. For thirteen years professor at the Pontifical Liturgical Institute at Sant'Anselmo in Rome, Leachman also established professional

links teaching at the Catholic University in Leuven, Belgium. Originally an Anglican pastor, he became a Catholic in the mid-1980s, joined the monastery and obtained his doctorate in Sacred Liturgy. He has published extensively in journals such as *Ecclesia Orans*, *Questions Liturgiques*, and *Studia Liturgica*. He has authored a number of books with his Benedictine colleague Daniel McCarthy, most recently *Come Into the Light: Church Interiors for the Celebration of Liturgy* (2014).



MASS ROCKS

This is not a news item about church music. It is about renewal through reconnecting with history. For three centuries after the Reformation, Catholics in Ireland were not allowed to practise their faith. Danger notwithstanding, they would nevertheless gather in the dead of night to celebrate Mass on a rock in a hidden location in the countryside. These Mass Rocks are still dotted all around the Irish countryside. Some have been regular sites for a local pilgrimage, others are scarcely recognised. A campaign for the renewal of faith in Ireland has encouraged the celebration of Mass at these rocks for the feast of the Irish Martyrs (20 June). Those who take part are seeking inspiration from the example of their ancestors and their commitment to the Eucharist in time of trial. (Picture: *Irish News*)



LITURGY PLANNING CALENDAR 2022

Traditionally, *Liturgy News* in September has included the fold-out *Liturgy Planning Calendar*. This does not work in our new electronic format, but we have produced them in hard-copy and can send them to you.

Every classroom in the school should have one for their notice board. Each member of the Parish Pastoral Council and Liturgy Committee also needs a copy to prepare for the year ahead.

So order them online now (only \$3 each)

www.liturgybrisbane.net.au

And don't forget the ORDO, the DAILY MASS BOOK, BREAK OPEN THE WORD, and PRAYING TOGETHER WITH YOUNG PEOPLE for next year 2022

GLIMMERS OF GRACE

FUNERALS ON THE FRINGES

by Thomas Ryan SM



I'd like to talk about funerals, but from a limited perspective, namely, that of a priest in active retirement, not involved in day-to-day parish life. I also write from a specific context, to which I now turn.

Two years ago, a local funeral director phoned looking for a priest to conduct a funeral service at a cemetery chapel. The deceased person (and their family) wanted a Catholic ceremony (with burial or cremation). I put my hand up. That led to other funerals, again not in a parish but in a cemetery or crematorium chapel.

Initially, I was a bit apprehensive. It was walking into unknown territory 'cold'. We had never met; we were, in effect, strangers to each other. The first step was to contact a family member. Although not face-to-face, the initial phone call went some way to establishing a personal relationship. Emails did the rest.

The deceased, the contact person and other family members may be nominally Catholic, with only minimal links to the Church. Further, a family death may not be familiar turf. Even when another loved one has died previously, the family will be grateful for help in knowing what to do and how to do it when it comes to the funeral.

Which means? How to remember (and be grateful). How to farewell (and, at times, be regretful). How to handle these things respectfully and sensitively within the Christian liturgy. In everyday parlance, through the funeral service, a family wants to 'do it right' and, perhaps, mend some fences at the same time.

I have generally found that the family's request indicates a sincere desire for a Christian service, one based on the Catholic rite of funerals, a celebration permeated with assurances of God's loving mercy and consoling hope.

Usually, as I work with the family, an opening prayer and a reading (possibly two) are chosen and, perhaps, a poem or prose reflection leading into the final commendation and farewell. I have yet to sense any need to press the 'mute' button about Jesus, the resurrection, divine love and forgiveness.

A Eulogy or Family Reflections

The recent practice of eulogies further enables family members and friends to participate in the funeral liturgy rather than, as often, be present just as onlookers. This possibility helps ensure the personal aspect of each funeral and the unique situation of the person being farewelled. At the same time, it provides an opportunity for a 'review of life' of the deceased – an act of remembering and of gratitude. A presider who is, in reality, a stranger is not in a position to do that.

Naturally, placing boundaries around eulogies is an issue. These need to be negotiated with the funeral director since, in a cemetery chapel, a funeral is book-ended by services that precede or follow. In one case, there were seven eulogies!! Still, all up they took around 35 minutes, with the service completed in just under an hour – well within the time booked for the chapel.

With such a funeral, I learn so much about the deceased person. There are tears; there is laughter. Sometimes, in presenting a few words, someone finds it a bit much. People understand. Whether the eulogy is completed or not, there is something real and truthful about it all, in the remembering and the sadness, in the gratitude and the celebration of a life.

Sometimes the Catholic aspect emerges in the family's story; sometimes it receives little mention. For all that, I continue to be struck by the glimmers of grace, the hidden God beneath the secular language. One can see the luminous traces of God's unobtrusive presence in a deceased person's devoted love and generosity, in their learning from mistakes and failures, in their regrets and in forgiveness. These are the threads that make up the tapestry of a person's life and family story.

This is why I am convinced about the importance for family members to have the opportunity to name their experience through words. It takes a lot of courage to stand up and speak in public for those not accustomed to it, especially at the funeral of their mum or dad, sister, brother or child. But it is an important step in the grieving process that leads to healing and acceptance.

In allowing space for that, the Church is doing the mourning family a service. Such a gesture might well prompt a moment of insight, a whisper of divine grace touching the deepest recesses of a heart, a nudge toward letting God into one's life – which might also include the Church.

Video presentations

Nothing beats images and pictures for tapping the deepest affections in human life. When the spoken words are reinforced by images, a powerful blend results that can enhance both the ritual itself and the lives of those present.

For instance, in one case of the sudden and unexpected death of a teenage lad, his mother's work colleagues who were involved in the media brought their skills to the video presentation, the design of the funeral and the accompanying booklet. The service included something I'd never seen before – another striking instance of liturgy as participation and collaboration – all those present, including many young people, were

invited to take a felt tip pen and write a farewell message on the young man's pinewood casket. He was sent forth clothed in the blessings of his friends.

I find that, even if I had not met the deceased, by this stage I have a pretty good idea of the person who is being remembered and farewelled. There will almost certainly be one or two elements that I can briefly highlight leading into the final prayers of commendation. Still, more words may not be needed. All that has been said, seen, enacted and sung has enabled the funeral liturgy to close on a personal note and, importantly, within the context of faith in Jesus Christ and an affirmation of God's love and the promise of eternal life – all things which the Catholic liturgy captures so beautifully.

And the Music?

Funeral chapels have good resources and helpful staff. Sometimes, the family might choose something like Gounod's *Ave Maria* or the *Pie Jesu* from Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Requiem*. More often, they opt for something more loosely described as 'secular'. The service could close with Nat King Cole's *Smile*. On two occasions, the Video presentation ended with an entrancing rendition of *Over the Rainbow* sung in a soft tenor voice and accompanied by a ukulele – you could hear a pin drop.

What if a song from a band such as Midnight Oil is requested? If the funeral's format is a collaborative exercise, there is always a place for negotiation, especially around this question. Is it sensitive and respectful both to the occasion and also to the dignity and memory of the deceased?

What about a request for Frank Sinatra's rendition of *My Way*? It has only happened once for me. In this instance, it was ironic that the song's words were completely at odds with the texture and shape of the deceased person's story. Doing it 'my way' was quite the reverse of someone whose life revolved around being there for his wife, children, grandchildren and friends. These are considerations which might be raised with the family in the negotiation. As an aside, Sinatra's daughter Tina once observed that her father grew to hate the song; he always thought it was self-serving and self-indulgent. That makes sense. In Sinatra's love songs, his attention was directed to another, not on himself.

Such experiences have really made me think again about music and funerals. It brought to mind an observation from the late Dennis Potter, English television dramatist, script writer and journalist. He once commented that pop songs are really today's version of the Psalms. Why the Psalms? Because they capture the deepest yearnings of the human spirit: love, loneliness, loss, failure, sin, regret, suffering, sorrow, and, especially, the yearning for happiness or for 'something more', God included (even if not named). These are the varied faces of human desire and of existential longings that pervade and animate African-American spirituals, soul, blue grass, country and western, as well as music from Celtic and Asian traditions.

Another memory came from an interview some years ago here in Australia with a visiting singer (I think it was Mary O'Hara interviewed by Margaret Throsby), a singer who was committed but not ostentatious in her

Catholic faith. She was asked why her concerts seemed to have no religious songs but only secular ones. She replied along these lines: *After the resurrection of Jesus, I believe that all songs are sacred.*

Is there a theology in all this? What is it saying?

How can these reflections be viewed within our Catholic tradition?

Firstly, the Bible itself incorporates books from secular sources, for example, *The Book of Ruth* or a wisdom book such as *Proverbs*.

Secondly, Jesus uses mainly secular language in the Gospels. His images and parables of seeds, yeast, fruits and trees suggest that there are plenty of clues in the world itself about how God works. We only have to look and listen.

How does God work? Rowan Williams reminds us that it is *subtly, slowly, from the very depth of being. Or steadily, irresistibly, like the light reaching the corners of the room. [God] works outwards from the heart of being into the life of every day – not inwards from some distant heaven. This is how God works, and you ought to be able to see it around you in the world God has created and rules (Meeting God in Mark, p. 43).*

I wonder if the funerals discussed above exemplify this process. In ritualizing critical events such as death, we can look to secular music, poems, songs that touch people; they tap into those yearnings at 'the very depth of being'. It is from here that God is also at work and the Church and ourselves should be attentive to it.

Pope Francis can also be our guide when he urges us *never to stop at the surface of things, especially when we have a person before us. We are called to look beyond, to focus on the heart in order to see how much generosity everyone is capable of (Misericordiae Vultus, p. 9).*

Or as the Pope says in another place, *Illumined by the gaze of Jesus Christ... [the Church] turns with love to those who participate in her life in an incomplete manner, recognising that the grace of God works also in their lives by giving them the courage to do good, to care for one another in love, and to be of service to the community in which they live and work (Amoris Laetitia, 291).*

Conclusion

These thoughts are based on one person's experience. Whether they are representative and helpful is for you to judge.

The Church has rich liturgical and pastoral resources to offer people in times of illness and death. In addition, words such as dialogue, collaboration and synodality reflect God's call for today's Church. What emerges from these reflections offers an interesting case study in how these concepts are at work in the interplay of the Church's liturgy and human experience, particularly in moments when people are most vulnerable...

Worth thinking about?

- Marist priest, Dr Tom Ryan, worked at Notre Dame University in Fremantle and at Australian Catholic University. His area of interest covers morality, spirituality and psychology.



SCHOOL GRADUATION CEREMONIES

Around this time of the year, Catholic schools, both primary and secondary, will be thinking about how to celebrate the graduation of their final year students. Once, it was traditional in most schools to hold a Mass on graduation day. This is understandable because the Eucharist is the Church's central sacrament, the 'summit and source' of its life and a sign of unity. Some parents may expect a Mass even though they themselves rarely attend Sunday Mass. Will that be the best choice?

Thirty years ago, the Archdiocese of Brisbane produced *A Planning Guide for Celebrating Major Events in Catholic Schools* (1992). Yes, things have changed in three decades! Nevertheless, the five-step process will be very useful for preparing a graduation liturgy today. Check out this historic document online: search for it on www.liturgybrisbane.net.au.

1. Getting the Basics.

This section helps to set out the when, what, who, where of the graduation event. Make a list of what needs to take place: presentation of awards; farewell and leave-taking; speeches (by principal, student, parent...); performance items; prayer of thanksgiving; sharing food and drink. Then make a list of who will be taking part: students, families, teachers, principal, politicians or community leaders...

Now you will be able to begin to describe the nature of the group which will be celebrating the graduation event. There was a time when we could presume a fairly homogenous practising Catholic community in our schools. Today the reality is very different. What is the religious demographic of participants:

Catholic, Anglican, Protestant, no religion, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist...? What is the ethnic background of the group: Indigenous, Anglo-Saxon, European, Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Pacific Islander...? Of the Catholic members, how many would be familiar with the liturgy of the Mass and be able to participate by making the responses and receiving Communion? It will be immediately obvious that what should be an expression of our unity in Christ can easily become a sign of division instead.

Since the whole student cohort is graduating, the graduation ritual must embrace all of them and their families. One former principal of a multi-cultural school used to say, *We are not necessarily a school for Catholics, but we are certainly a Catholic school.* The first step in preparing a school graduation is an honest appraisal of who we are and what we are doing.

2. If Eucharist is Included.

The 1992 *Planning Guide* then sets out some parameters for how a large-scale graduation Mass might be celebrated. Many of the ideas presented are very helpful should a Mass be appropriate.

One of the strategies we might adopt today is to regard the graduation as a cluster of events over several days. Graduating students can be acknowledged and celebrated at a parish Mass on the following weekend, for example. Of course, this then becomes a voluntary element for those who wish to avail themselves of the opportunity.

3. If Other Ritual is Included.

Liturgy should be a central aspect of graduation rituals in Catholic schools, but a form other than Mass will usually be a better, more inclusive, choice. Possibilities include Evening Prayer or a Liturgy of the Word. Both can incorporate suitable prayers and scripture readings, appropriate music, and symbols and gestures such as candles, incense and processions.

The choice of texts, music and ritual actions will be determined by discerning the basics. What are the particular talents, gifts and achievements the school wishes to highlight this year? This might suggest a metaphor or symbol which can

shape the event. Possible themes would include

- ◆ thanksgiving,
- ◆ leave-taking and sending,
- ◆ rejoicing in diversity and mutual respect,
- ◆ the journey of life,
- ◆ invoking God's blessing...

A liturgical rite, however, cannot cover all these elements and needs to be carefully integrated with other parts of the celebration.

Liturgy requires full, conscious and active participation by all. It should be sharply differentiated therefore from concert items performed for an audience. It would be poor form, for example, to have a politician 'on stage' while a vested bishop is leading the liturgy... which leads to the fourth section:

4. Organising the Structure.

The possibilities for graduation day are endless. What will your day look like?

- ◆ Liturgy of thanksgiving / refreshments / concert items / presentation of awards
- ◆ Speeches and presentation of awards / liturgy of blessing / formal dinner
- ◆ Story-telling with video images, interspersed with prayer+song / presentation of awards
- ◆ Gift to school (e.g. planting a tree) / liturgy of the patron saint / principal's address / awards

5. Planning the Details.

This is a very practical section of *A Planning Guide*, covering decisions about art and environment, music and texts. Here there are many opportunities to let the event reflect the changing nature of today's school and the identity of the graduating group: students' art from a variety of cultures, music and dance of different ethnic groups, sacred texts from other religious traditions paired with the biblical texts, a variety of languages, variety in dress and in cuisine. We do not want to annihilate the Catholic tradition which lies at the root of the Catholic school; but our tradition can be enriched in such a way that all the graduating students are recognised and respected.



THE COMMUNION SONG: When to Sing and What to Sing.

by Michael Mangan, *Liturgy Brisbane*

Have you ever attended a banquet where the musicians engaged to provide dinner music enjoy their appetisers while the guests eat in silence? Of course not! However, a liturgical version of this scenario is enacted in many churches and cathedrals each weekend as music ministers rush to be first in line to receive communion. By the time the communion song begins, a quarter of the assembly has already received the sacrament, often in complete silence.

The word 'ministry' comes from the Latin *ministerium*, meaning 'service'. Servants always prioritise the needs of the guests and of the occasion. Music ministers are called to serve the needs of both the liturgy and the assembly; in the Communion Rite these needs are very clear. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM), the 'user manual' for liturgy, spells out the purpose and procedure for the communion song.

While the priest is receiving the Sacrament, the communion [song] is begun (GIRM 86). Not after the priest has received. Not after the communion antiphon has been recited. Not after a long instrumental introduction while the choir is receiving communion. The communion procession begins with the priest's communion, and the song should accompany the entire procession. Does it matter?

It matters. The purpose of the communion song *is to express the communicants' union in spirit by means of the unity of their voices, to show joy of heart, and to highlight more clearly the 'communitarian' nature of the procession to receive communion* (GIRM 86). Theologically and liturgically, the Communion Rite is

about unity in and through the Body of Christ. *Many* become *one* as the assembly processes to eat and drink in a shared ritual action; the 'glue' that unifies this ritual is the song. Communal song enables the assembly to experience and express unity as they move in procession to become sacramentally unified in the eucharistic meal.

Importantly, the 'unity of voices' which is called for in GIRM 86 is only possible if the assembly can actively participate in the chosen song. Enabling the voice of the assembly is the paramount consideration. This is no time for silence, instrumentals, solos or choir performances. It is about the participation of the people. So, can the assembly sing the song? Is the refrain easily remembered? Does the language in the song express unity – *we, us* and *our* rather than *I, me* and *my*? Is the song *processional* in nature? Does it accompany and assist the physical *movement* of the procession?

There are tensions in the documents. GIRM 87 states that *[the communion song] is sung by the choir alone, or by the choir or cantor with the people*. The first option – 'the choir alone' singing the communion song – is an outright contradiction of the directions and spirit of GIRM 86. I have noticed in some liturgical documents that the underpinning theology, purpose and 'best practice' are stated first (GIRM 86) and then a 'fall back' position (often to placate alternative viewpoints) is given afterwards. We must always look to the principles and best practice! Let the people sing and the choir support them.

How long should the communion song last? *The singing is continued for as long as the Sacrament is being administered to the faithful* (GIRM 86). To unify the communion procession, the song accompanies the distribution of communion for as long as practically possible. The paragraph concludes: *Care should be taken that singers, too, can receive communion with ease*. So, when and how do music ministers receive communion? Certainly, musicians' communion must not be forgotten but this occurs after they have served the liturgy and the assembly. Balancing these seemingly competing needs is imperative and is possible with careful forethought and planning.

Specific procedures will depend on the size and make up of the music ministry group and their placement in the liturgical space.

A larger group might go to receive communion a few at a time so that some are always available to support the assembly's song; and, of course, those in procession would still be singing as part of the full, conscious and actively participating assembly! This might mean that the flute descant or vocal harmonies that have been rehearsed will need to be omitted for part of the song. But are the harmonies the priority here? Is the performance of the choir/instrumentalists more important than the song of the assembly during the communion procession? The liturgy says no.

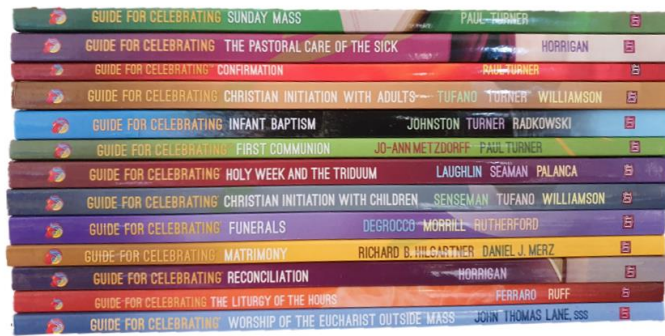
For smaller groups with a single accompanist, an instrumental might continue as the singers receive communion or the singers could continue to lead the song of the assembly *a capella* as they join the end of the procession. And, if necessary, a little silence as the last few musicians receive communion is immeasurably preferable to beginning with a long silence as the musicians come to the table first. Communion ministers will be aware of the local procedure and ensure that the musicians also have the opportunity to share in the eucharistic banquet.

In conclusion:

- The communion song begins as the priest receives communion and continues for as long as the sacrament is being administered.
- This song belongs to the assembly: the unity of voices shows a unity of spirit and highlights the communitarian nature of the communion procession.
- The communion procession is not a time for silence, instrumentals or choral pieces in which the assembly cannot participate.
- As servants of the liturgy and the assembly, music ministers must firstly fulfill the requirements of the rite. This will mean that they receive communion at the end of the procession.

Finally, while there may be good logistical reasons for music ministers hurrying off to communion first, there are no good liturgical or theological reasons to do so. Liturgy always trumps logistics!

B BOOKS



Preparing Parish Worship

by John Fitz-Herbert

Liturgy Training Publications (LTP) is a well-known publisher of liturgical and pastoral materials in English as well as in Spanish. LTP was established by the Archdiocese of Chicago in 1964 to promote the liturgical formation of the faithful called for Vatican II, that they *become thoroughly imbued with the spirit and power of the liturgy* (SC 14).

From 2015 to 2020, LTP published an impressive series of thirteen books under the general title, *Preparing Parish Worship*. A spoiler alert: this is a must investment!

The very title of this series will no doubt appeal to many readers of *Liturgy News* who are convinced of and practise preparing liturgy for all sorts of celebrating assemblies in parishes, schools, aged care places, hospitals, and dioceses. It reminds long-time practitioners and novices on liturgy teams that we *prepare the liturgy, not plan the liturgy*.

The title of each book begins, *Guide for Celebrating...* followed by the name of the major liturgical rite to be celebrated. The available titles and their year of publication are:

- ◆ Guide for Celebrating Sunday Mass (2019)
- ◆ Guide for Celebrating Christian Initiation with Adults (2017)
- ◆ Guide for Celebrating Christian Initiation with Children (2017)
- ◆ Guide for Celebrating Infant Baptism - 2nd edition (2020)
- ◆ Guide for Celebrating Confirmation (2016)
- ◆ Guide for Celebrating First Communion (2015)
- ◆ Guide for Celebrating Holy Week and the Triduum (2017)
- ◆ Guide for Celebrating Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass (2015)
- ◆ Guide for Celebrating The Liturgy of the Hours (2020)

- ◆ Guide for Celebrating Matrimony (2016)
- ◆ Guide for Celebrating Reconciliation (2018)
- ◆ Guide for Celebrating The Pastoral Care of the Sick (2019)
- ◆ Guide for Celebrating Funerals (2017)

A central structure is common to each book: a theological and historical development or overview; preparing the rite or rites; and frequently asked questions.

I really appreciate that each theological and historical overview brings together the best of current scholarship grounded in the scriptures, drawing on the diversity of historical practices, the documents of the liturgy, and relating them to the questions of culture and everyday life.

One example will suffice. In the *Guide for Celebrating First Communion* there is a potted history of the ritual of first communion. I admit to knowing little of this but was delighted to see the author (none other than Paul Turner) drawing on the meticulous scholarship of Cairns priest Barry Craig and his 2011 book *Fractio Panis*.

The approach taken in the section *Preparing the Rite* balances the structure of each rite as given in the ritual book with on-the-ground realities that all preparation teams are keenly aware of when a liturgy is to be prepared.

I found it helpful to be reminded of what is essential, to explore possible approaches to the parts of each liturgy, and to contemplate a range of pastoral concerns with which liturgy preparers wrestle. Good liturgy preparation acknowledges the graced messiness of personal, familial and parish life.

Frequently Asked Questions demonstrate again how to hold onto what is essential in liturgy – and therefore to faith – while taking seriously the life of believers, shifts in liturgical understanding and practice, and the complexity of culture.

The authors often plead with us to remember the people who are celebrating a particular liturgy in a particular place and at a particular time, sage advice for all pastors, musicians, preparation teams,

catechists, parish leaders, liturgical ministers and bishops.

The central structure of each title is bookended by a preface/welcome and resources/glossary/acknowledgements. The prefaces are written by Paul Turner offering an imaginative and creative retelling of scriptural stories. These are delightful and inclusive of women and men, teens and children. The list of resources is wide ranging and opens up a broad selection of additional texts for those who want to dig deep.

The glossary is specific and appropriate for each *Guide*. Each glossary is a marvellous reminder of the words we use in liturgy and their meaning. There is a wealth of material here for an entire liturgical Trivia Night!

Do I have any concerns with this series? No. It is excellent, necessary and timely. Thank you LTP.

Do I have any recommendations for second editions or future revisions? Yes. They are minor and few.

I would have liked to see more female writers. For example, it is regrettable that a female author did not contribute to the book on the Liturgy of the Hours or the text on Matrimony. They are not large books, but would benefit from an expansion of shared authorship. Justice is a sibling to inclusion!

Also, in future editions, I would like to see on the cover of each *Guide* a dynamic image of liturgical subjects engaging with the liturgical actions and symbols. Instead of a static photo of an oil bottle, show an eight year old girl being anointed by the bishop with her sponsor's hand on the shoulder; instead of a pair of wedding rings, show a newly married couple exchanging the rings or a couple exchanging their vows.

The entire series of thirteen books cost me \$400. This is an investment for most parishes and presiders. It is one that every parish may like to consider because it will update and renew similar resources already in the parish office. Presiders might also like to update, remembering that this expenditure can be included as a tax deduction for 2022!



Volume 51 Number 3
SPRING ♦ September 2021

Imprimatur: ✠ Mark Coleridge DD DSS
Archbishop of Brisbane

© Liturgy Brisbane.
All rights reserved
ISSN 2653-0090 (Online)

EDITORIAL BOARD

Rev Dr Tom Elich (*editor*)
Sr Maree Byron OSU
Mr Gerry Crooks
Rev John Fitz-Herbert
Mrs Elizabeth Harrington
Sr Ursula O'Rourke sgs
Mrs Clare Schwantes

Articles for publication are welcome.
We reserve the right to edit material in
consultation with the author.



CONTACT

GPO Box 282, Brisbane Australia 4001
orders@liturgybrisbane.net.au
www.liturgybrisbane.net.au