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Liturgy

NEWS



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THE CHAIR

CHAIRS come in a bewildering array of designs and materials: some heavily padded, some little more than an austere stool or bench; chairs with arms and without; chairs for the kitchen, dining room, lounge or office; some sleekly modern, others looking like antiques; chairs in timber, plastic, metal, leather and fabric. Choosing a chair for use on a church sanctuary can present a dilemma. I know one big priest who arrived in a new parish to behold in the sanctuary a petit presider's chair in French-style rococo. A parishioner unkindly remarked that, when he sat on it in vestments, it reminded her of a pot-bellied stove.

A Cathedra

A cathedral gets its name from the bishop's chair, the *cathedra*. The bishop is the focus of unity in the local Church of a diocese; he is the chief pastor and teacher. His seat has an important place on the cathedral sanctuary along with the ambo and altar. Like the ambo and altar, the cathedra is a sign of Christ in whose Body and Blood all the baptised have communion.

All must be convinced that the preeminent manifestation of the Church is present in the full, active participation of all God's holy people in the liturgical celebration, especially in the same Eucharist, in a single prayer, at one altar at which the bishop presides, surrounded by his presbyters and ministers (SC 41).

Now, in the parish church, there is also a chair, but it is not a cathedra. The parish represents the visible Church in that local part of the world and the priest exercises a leadership of service among the people, presiding over their liturgical celebration. Parish liturgy should express a lively sense of the ecclesial

community. In a way, the priest represents the bishop in a parish community but I am not sure that we should imagine the presider's chair as a 'parish cathedra'.

How then should we think of the presider's chair in the liturgical space?

Looking at parish churches, one often finds an unhelpful seat for the presider, either by reason of its design or its placement. I have seen chairs that are monumental, with a high back and large arms – yes, they do present themselves as a 'cathedra' if not as a throne. I have also seen the opposite – a vinyl office swivel chair sitting on the sanctuary!

Frequently the chair is located at the back of the sanctuary, perhaps where a cathedra might be located. In a parish community, this can be very remote from the people who are separated both by its elevation and the altar which stands in front of it. Sometimes, the chair also gives the impression that the person sitting there is above or separate from the proclamation of the word of God that takes place at the ambo.

The Parish Assembly for Liturgy

The celebrant of the liturgy is Christ. All those who are baptised into Christ, who are part of the Body of Christ, celebrate the liturgy. This body is structured, of course, with people exercising various ministries and leadership roles. The priest, by virtue of his ordination, is one of them. His ordination adds to his baptism, but does not override it or annul it. Therefore, I would like to see the presider's chair, like the ambo and altar, integrated into the space for the assembly of the baptised and their liturgical action. The people's seats are placed in relation to the ambo in such a way that they can receive the word and take it to heart. The people gather round the altar to give them the sense that all together as the Body of Christ they offer the sacrifice. I propose that we should consider a stronger integration of the chair into this matrix.

Many elements in the liturgy are designed to highlight the special role given by ordination to the priest who presides in the liturgy. He dresses in vestments. He enters in procession after the people have taken their place. His words, gestures and postures are unique

to him. He is shown special deference. And he sits in this special chair. It is more difficult to notice the elements which unite him to the community of the baptised which forms the Body of Christ.

Design and Position of the Chair

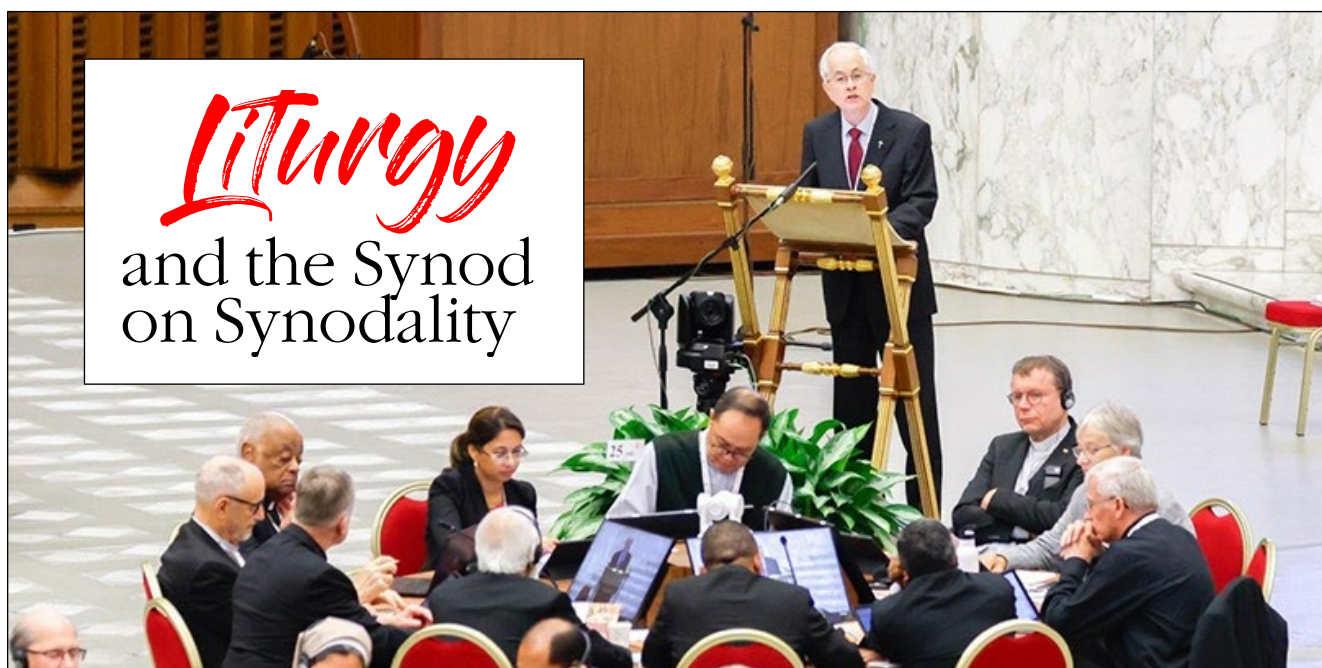
I suggest that the presider's chair can play an important role here. In its design and material, it could relate more strongly to the seating for the assembly. It may be made from the same timber as the pews, in a similar design, and carry similar embellishments. Whether the people's seats are plain timber or upholstered, the presider's chair could follow the same cues.

Likewise, its positioning is important. It could be located at the edge of the people's seating, and oriented in the same line. Sometimes, just turning the chair sideways in the sanctuary may make a huge difference. It may be misleading to have it facing square onto the people, suggesting that he is apart, above or even against the assembly. During the Liturgy of the Word, he should be listening to the reader with the people and appear to be doing so.

Normally, the priest speaks from the chair at the beginning of the liturgy and at the end, and from there he leads the profession of faith and intercessions. However, if locating the chair closer to the assembly makes this difficult, he may step away to speak into a microphone placed in a better location. But at least he will be one with the people in listening to the readings, and in times of silence and quiet communal prayer.

The chair itself will not do all the work. The priest in his style of presiding needs to operate from the mindset that the liturgy is not what he is doing, but what he leads the assembly in doing. This changes his voice, its cadences and emphases; it changes his gestures and posture. It means above all that he is focussed on what is taking place. It is true that he may have heard the Sunday readings twice or three times already. But he needs to listen anew with the assembly and not give himself to miscellaneous bits of organisation on the sanctuary.





Liturgy and the Synod on Synodality

by Ormond Rush

If there is one accent that marks Pope Francis' vision for renewal and reform of the Catholic Church it is the simple reminder that the Church must always be beholden to God. In other words, the Church is not an authority in its own right. Liturgical worship of God is a humble recognition of that fundamental truth. Liturgy is a reverent bowing in acknowledgement of God as the Church's primary authority in all things. But how do we know God's will? Through listening to the Holy Spirit. A synodal Church seeks, then, to listen to the Holy Spirit.

The first session of the Synod of Bishops, which focussed on Synodality itself (in October 2023), was indeed structured with a 'Godward-focused' liturgical accent. The very first liturgical event was an ecumenical service in St Peter's Square the day before the assembly began. Each day we began with the Office of Morning Prayer, and we would end the day with the Office of Evening Prayer. Celebration of daily Eucharist was generally in the Basilica of St Peter, just a short walk from the Paul VI Audience Hall where the Synod assembly took place; each day there would be a different rite of the Catholic Church, both Eastern and Latin. Throughout the month of our meeting, there were also less official liturgical events. One such prayer liturgy was at the site of Timothy Schmalz' bronze artwork entitled *Angels Unaware*, recently installed within St Peter's Square. It strikingly depicts the anguish of refugees and migrants. Among the 140 figures depicted, there is a man with a carpenter's box and, behind him, a woman who carries a baby.

Equally important, there were peppered throughout each day of the Synod periods of silence (generally 3 minutes), when we were invited to enter prayerfully into whatever had been shared earlier, for example, in a table report, or in an intervention by an individual, or in an address on a particular topic. Here, such prayerful silence was an

invitation into that key disposition of 'a synodal Church'—the dimension of *listening*.

The One to whom the Church should be listening is ultimately God; we listen through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In John's Gospel, we read of Jesus' promise to his disciples: *when the Spirit of truth comes he will guide you in all truth* (John 16:13). Pope Francis regularly refers to Vatican II's teaching on this matter, citing *Lumen Gentium* 12 on 'the supernatural sense of the faith (*sensus fidei*) of the whole people' which the Holy Spirit bestows on each of the baptised and on the Church as a whole. A synodal Church seeks to listen to this guidance from the Holy Spirit — we listen to God by listening to one another.

This aspect of *listening* to the Holy Spirit was fundamental to the synodal assembly last October. If I could choose one key aspect of the meeting that captured the spirit of synodality it would be the optics in the room (the room being the Paul VI Audience Hall). You may have seen photos. There were 35 round tables, each with 10–12 Synod members — cardinals sitting beside lay women and men, deacons and priests from all around the world. The 'liturgical' aspect of these table sharings cannot be emphasised enough. Pope Francis had insisted that the sharing was not to be like some 'parliamentary debate'. Rather, it was to be a realisation of the Holy Spirit guiding and empowering the Church throughout the ever-changing contexts of human history, regarding how to interpret and apply the Gospel of Jesus Christ in these ever-new contexts. The method of 'conversation in the Spirit' had been adopted as the approach taken at these table sharings. This is an Ignatian (Jesuit) practice, but there are many such approaches that could well be used in the future, such as Benedictine, Augustinian, Franciscan, Dominican, and many more.

Dr Ormond Rush addresses the General Assembly of the Synod on Synodality on a dynamic understanding of tradition. Rome, 23 October 2023.

The 2021–2024 Synod's theme was *For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission*. Interestingly, this order of the three themes was changed before the first session of the assembly met in October 2023. Both ways of ordering these fundamental themes from Vatican II can be justified theologically. But I do like the latest rendition, with 'participation' as the last in the list: communion and mission are realised through active participation in the inner and outer life of the church. The liturgical aspects of each of these three could well be examined in depth, but I'd like to focus briefly on participation as an aspect of a synodal church.

Vatican II enthusiastically embraced this notion of 'participation'. In the Latin lexicon of Vatican II, the noun *participatio* occurs 40 times; the verb *participare*, 71 times. There are also important synonyms, such as the word *consortes* (synonym for *participes*), which the documents use to translate the original Greek word for *koinōnoi* in 2 Peter 1:4 (*participants in the divine nature*). Chronologically, the cognates of *participatio* appear initially in the Council's first document on liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. It would appear that, from then on, the notion of 'participation' grew in importance in the mind of the Council, but with an expanding range of interrelated meanings.

Seen retrospectively, once all the documents had been promulgated by 1965, there is what could be called a 'theologic' regarding Vatican II's teaching on participation, particularly evident in its four constitutions: participation in God (*Dei Verbum*); participation in the liturgy and in the Paschal Mystery (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*); participation in the Church and its mission (*Lumen Gentium*); participation in the Church in the world (*Gaudium et Spes*). As paragraph 7 (g) of the *Synthesis Report* expresses it: synodality seeks to foster *the active participation of all the faithful in the life and mission of the Church*.

Several other points from the *Report* are directly relevant to the liturgy. These issues relate to both the Church *ad extra* (the Church in its mission within the world and society) and the Church *ad intra* (the Church in its inner life, liturgy, relationships and ministry). Of course, the Synod saw these as intimately connected, with the missionary, outward focus of local Churches the goal.

Concerning the former, the Synod brought forth a recognised need to listen to the voices of those negatively affected by the ecological crisis. This should find expression in liturgy, as the *Synthesis Report* 4 (q) notes: *Church teaching, liturgy, and practice must more explicitly and carefully integrate the biblical and theological foundations of integral ecology*. Moreover, there was a call for local Churches, if they are to be synodal, to welcome migrants and refugees, a key aspect of Pope Francis' pontificate. This call has implications for how migrants and refugees are able to celebrate liturgy in their new country, as the *Synthesis Report*, 5 (d) urges: *Respect for the liturgical traditions and religious practices of migrants is an integral part of an authentic welcome*.

Concerning the inner life of the Church, several matters were raised which relate directly to liturgy. The issue of poor translations of the 2010 *Missal* is a somewhat subdued issue in the *Report*—but it is there. Paragraph 3 (l) of the *Report* addresses *the widely reported need to make*

liturgical language more accessible to the faithful and more embodied in the diversity of cultures. It goes on to state: *Without calling continuity with tradition and the need for better liturgical formation into question, deeper reflection is needed. Episcopal Conferences should be entrusted with a wider responsibility in this regard, according to the Motu Proprio Magnum Principium*.

Following on from the expansion of the ministries of lector and acolyte to both women and men, the *Synthesis Report* 8 (n) proposes even further opportunities for greater participation: *We need more creativity in establishing ministries according to the needs of local Churches, with the particular involvement of the young. One can think of further expanding responsibilities assigned to the existing ministry of lector; responsibilities that are already broader than those performed in the liturgy. This could become a fuller ministry of the word of God, which, in appropriate contexts, could also include preaching*.

The participation of women in the Church was a dominant theme throughout the month-long assembly. A separate section (number 9) in the *Report* is devoted to 'Women in the Life and Mission of the Church'. Two issues related to liturgy can be highlighted.

First, while acknowledging that there were different positions taken in the assembly regarding the access of women to the diaconate, the *Report* 9 (n) does make this proposal: *Theological and pastoral research on the access of women to the diaconate should be continued, benefiting from consideration of the results of the commissions specially established by the Holy Father, and from the theological, historical and exegetical research already undertaken. If possible, the results of this research should be presented to the next Session of the Assembly*.

Second, the *Report* 9 (q) also proposes that language in the liturgy reflect the experience and sensibilities of women: *There is a need to ensure that liturgical texts and Church documents are more attentive to the use of language that takes into equal consideration both men and women, and also includes a range of words, images and narratives that draw more widely on women's experience*.

Finally, a further question could be raised: how might parish and diocesan liturgy committees incorporate synodal practices, such as 'conversation in the Spirit', into the mode of their meetings? As the *Report* 2 (d) notes regarding the Synod's experience of this mode of proceeding: *Conversation in the Spirit is a tool that, even with its limitations, enables authentic listening in order to discern what the Spirit is saying to the Churches. Its practice has elicited joy, awe and gratitude and has been experienced as a path of renewal that transforms individuals, groups, and the Church*. This raises the issue of liturgical formation. The word 'formation' occurs 55 times in the *Synthesis Report*; it was regularly mentioned on the Synod floor.

These and other issues are undergoing further study before being discussed again at the second session of the Synod assembly in October 2024.

■ Rev Dr Ormond Rush, Associate Professor of Religion and Theology at ACU, is one of the theologians involved in the on-going Synod on Synodality in Rome 2023-2024.



What the Filing Cabinet Revealed About the Sacraments

by Anne Sheehan

Baptism

We in Bundaberg are guided by a Diocesan Sacramental Policy. This was not always the case. Thirty years ago, we were blessed to have nuns as pastoral workers whose responsibility it was to prepare parents for the baptism of their children. Many of our parishes owe a great debt of gratitude to the Sisters for their pastoral work. As their time in the parish drew to a close, they ensured that suitable couples or individuals were trained and formed in the sacramental preparation of parents. A Baptism Ministry team was created. The team method continues today.

Sifting through the paperwork, I came across many and varied programs of preparation implemented over the years. The resources used may have changed from photocopied sheets to workbooks to digital resources but the symbols of water, candle, oil and white clothing have not. The liturgy and its symbols are powerful catechising tools.

The number of infants and children to the age of 7 being baptised, either during Mass or after Mass, has declined greatly over the 30-year timeframe. The baptismal responsibility of nurturing the children in faith has seemingly been forgotten and overlooked by many parents, to such an extent that our familial faith is not being passed down from generation to generation. Young parents at some stage need to make the faith of their parents their own. This is a concern but is indicative of a wider problem for the Church as a whole. It is not a localised issue.

Baptismal preparation groups are, in some instances, the first encounter of faith for young parents today. They are the face and voice of the Church. Training and formation of such teams, then, becomes absolutely necessary.

Sacramental Preparation for Childhood Sacraments

Which leads me to my next revelation. Thirty years ago, sacramental preparation of school-aged children became the responsibility of the parish, no longer that of the 'good Sisters' or the Catholic schools. Catholic schools continued to teach 'about' the sacrament rather than prepare the children 'for' the sacrament. Formation of sacramental teams emerged, of which the leaders of Religious Education in our Catholic Schools (the REC or APRE) were members. Preparation became a three-way partnership between parish and family and school. In many smaller parishes of our diocese the APRE is also the parish's sacramental coordinator.

Over the years, many models of preparation have been tried and tested, rejected and revised. I have seen child-centred classes, parent/child groupings with parent leaders or catechists using workbooks, parent sessions combined

I gave myself three days between Christmas and New Year to pack up my office and hand over the reins of pastoral worker to my successor. Cleaning out thirty years as the parish's liturgy, music, sacraments and RCIA coordinator ended up being a mammoth task taking a further week and a pleasant trip down memory lane.

The amount of paper discarded was incredible. Photocopied articles, programs, meeting agendas and minutes, templates for resources, conference bags and liturgy outlines. The memories of past liturgies and rites prepared, sacramental programs presented, conferences attended, courses undertaken, as well as the names of RCIA candidates and catechumens and the people with whom I have worked and met along the way were brought to the fore as each piece passed through my hands to the recycle bin.

My observations as a parish worker in a city in a regional diocese of Queensland may resonate with others who work in the vineyard. Consistently, this cleansing process verified my belief that, with the limited resources it has and the emerging changes that come with the years, the local Church is striving to carry out the mission and mandate of Christ.

Methods of achieving work goals may change over time, paper versus digital, but the objectives and content have not. The Mass will always be the Mass, regardless of which edition of the Missal we are using. Appropriate sacred songs will always be needed to enhance the liturgy, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults will always include the same elements of welcome and inclusion, and so on.

Changes in Sacramental Preparation

The sacramental life of the parish community is the responsibility of the parish priest first and foremost, assisted by all the baptised, guided by diocesan policy. My role as Sacramental Coordinator encompassed responsibility for the Baptism of Infants, the childhood sacraments of Confirmation, Eucharist and Reconciliation, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, and Marriage.

It is in this area of parish life that I have seen the most change, not so much in the theology or rites of the sacraments, but in the preparation and presentation for the sacraments as the profile of the parish changed.

with parent/child sessions and, more recently, an emphasis on parent formation sessions. We believe that it is the parents who need the most formation in order to prepare their child for the celebration of the sacraments. The sacramental program is a prime adult faith formation opportunity.

The resources used were many and varied too. My clean out uncovered programs I had written myself coming from a Catholic school teaching background, a wonderful program presented by Sr Helen Carboon in the early 2000s, commercial programs from Liturgical Press, Twenty-Third Publications, Dynamic Catholic and Broken Bay Diocese, and finally one modelled on Patricia Brady's experience in her parish of Adelaide Hills.



As a passionate RCIA coordinator, I attended Patricia's workshop at the 2010 National RCIA Conference, Glenelg, and experienced a light-bulb moment. Patricia adapted the RCIA model to use in children's sacramental preparation, moving away from a school-term based program to a liturgical calendar based process where the sacramental celebrations coincided with the appropriate liturgical season, also coinciding with the whole parish's journey with the catechumens. Lent became the season for Reconciliation and Easter became the season for completing initiation with the celebration of Confirmation and Eucharist.

The debate about the appropriate age of candidates, order of sacramental reception, and how to celebrate the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist, either as separate liturgies or together in one Mass, has been ongoing for my thirty years. Having a Diocesan Sacramental Policy is essential for guidance. The fuss about what to wear for the celebrations, how the parish celebrates afterwards, the local customs for the timing of the celebrations, and even to some extent, the model and program of preparation that are used, are immaterial in the wider scheme of things. Being able to communicate with a group of well-intentioned, mostly unchurched, parents the value of Jesus Christ present in our lives, gifted to us in word and sacrament, is becoming a basic priority for sacramental teams.

The emerging concern is that, like the baptism of infants, the number of children seeking to complete their initiation each year is in decline. Conversely, there is an increase in the number of older primary and secondary-aged students registering for preparation, and an increase in school-aged children who have yet to be baptised. These are the issues that need to be addressed on a wider scale at a national and diocesan level, between parents, schools, parishes, and

diocesan staff. The domestic Church is declining. The number of children who know Jesus is declining. This is sad.

As the face of the Church to our young families, sacramental teams need continual training, formation and support to be able to navigate these emerging changes. Our parish communities, including our priests, need to be awakened to their role as teachers who lead by example and support. Parish leadership teams need to build faith communities that are creative in their outlook, especially for the care of young families. The margins between the church and unchurched are widening. Large investments of resources, personnel, time, training and formation need to be infused into parish plans and budgets in order to address these margins.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

The R file in the sacramental drawer of the filing cabinet was the thickest. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is one of the Church's best gifts for dioceses and parishes. It has all the elements of a pastoral worker's dream – liturgy, prayer, story, history, scripture, music, faith, blessings, and interesting people! For me, it is a privilege to share my faith story with others, to hear their stories and to be able to journey with them to a relationship with God. To witness the small moments of conversion throughout the process brings joy.

Enabling every member of the parish community to understand their role in the journey has been my greatest challenge as an RCIA coordinator.

I attended my first Queensland RCIA Conference in Toowoomba around 2008. One of the presenters began the conference by displaying an image of William Hunt's *The Light of the World*, as displayed in St Paul's Cathedral, London, with the words: *Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to them, and will sup with them, and they with me (Revelation 3:20)*. I realised that some of the bravest people we have in our pews are those who knocked on the door of the parish office and inquired about becoming a Catholic Christian.

The RCIA, with its adaptations, is the perfect tool for achieving their goals. Along the way, the catechists and the assembly open the inquirers' minds and hearts to the power of mystery, the divine, prayer, tradition and traditions, scripture and the sacraments, of which the Eucharist is 'summit and source'. I remember Scott, when reflecting on his journey to Easter, told the assembly that *you Catholics have a treasure (the Eucharist) that you keep hidden. You should be telling others about it!* He's right!

One of the misconceptions about the RCIA is that it is a program, not a process. A shiver goes up my spine whenever I hear people – priests and bishops included – say that so-and-so is going through the RCIA 'program'. I am confident that after years of formation this message has reached those who work with catechumens and candidates. It would also be safe to say that today those same catechists realise that a process has no beginning and no end, so alleviating the need for a starting date in August or September and a finishing date at the Easter Vigil, or Pentecost if our energy levels allow. We have adopted the year-round model where applicable.

But the RCIA is messy. It is time consuming and pastorally demanding. No two inquirers are the same and, hence, no one program fits the process. Years ago, I witnessed the RCIA being carried out through the use of workbooks and cassettes for the leaders and participants. Later I saw scripture-based sessions, interrupted when someone realised that we probably should have a Rite of Acceptance soon. When I was given the opportunity to coordinate the RCIA, needless to say I made some changes, the first of which was to purchase copies of the Rite and form myself and the catechists in the Rite itself. Workbooks or resource books, cassettes, videos, CDs and YouTube became tools which supported the process.

I will continue as RCIA catechist in a volunteer capacity until Easter. I cannot abandon the Elect at this stage of the journey!

Final Words

After emptying the sacramental drawer of the filing cabinet, I am sure that the work of the parish pastoral worker is all about formation, training and review for the good of the people in our parishes. This enables people to go out and be disciples of Christ. Imagine a church where each person understood what was happening in the Mass, and their role in the Mass; a community of all ages that gathered on Sunday to celebrate good liturgy, cheerfully, and with a resolve to go, glorifying the Lord with their good deeds.

One of the constants of parish life is that the people of the parish will be there long after priests are transferred. It is not 'his parish' but 'our parish'. I have been fortunate to have worked with some very good priest leaders who had the best interests of the parishioners in mind, but sometimes I still wonder who ensures that our clergy have ongoing training and formation in the Rites, the sacramental processes and programs, and an understanding of the changes and adaptations that can be made in the Rites.

I am concerned about the future of the Church where the average age of parishioners is not getting lower. I believe more effort needs to go into building relationships with young families, providing opportunities to develop welcoming communities, being creative in our missionary efforts, investing money to employ people to assist the parish priest so that he can do his work of preaching the Gospel, administering the sacraments, and caring for the people.

Parish work as a vocation or career could be encouraged as a post-secondary opportunity. Tertiary and post-graduate courses are readily accessible today. Suitable and just employment compensations must be made available for such work. Young people of faith would be able to relate to the young parents and teachers in our parishes, but young people could not buy a house on a parish worker's wage. Fidelity to the Church's Tradition and creativity in its Mission is the challenge for every lay, consecrated or ordained person in our Church (Synod Report). I am hoping change keeps a-coming!

Sadly, I haven't even begun to tell you about the top drawer of the filing cabinet, the one marked L for Liturgy! That would take another article of reflection on the changes and practices, good or bad, I have experienced over the years.

■ Anne Sheehan, former teacher, was for three decades a pastoral worker for the Catholic Parish of Bundaberg in the Rockhampton Diocese where she was also a long-time member of the Diocesan Liturgical Commission.



Ritual Celebrations in the Catholic School

by Clare Schwantes

There are several occasions throughout the school year which call for ritual celebration in a Catholic school – Easter or Mothers Day, Anzac Day or end of year. When planning a Mass or a Liturgy of the Word within a school setting, there is no need to start from scratch. The Church has provided structures, rites and texts for the liturgy in the Missal, and has chosen readings which can be found in the Lectionary. This is a powerful sign that the liturgy belongs to the whole Church. Careful preparation is nonetheless required for a school liturgy since children's faith grows through liturgical experience appropriate to their developmental level. As emphasised in the *Directory for Masses with Children (DMC)*, each liturgical celebration with children should be carefully prepared beforehand, especially with regard to the prayers, songs, readings, and intentions of the general intercessions (*DMC* 29).

Preliminary Steps

- ♦ Consider whether it is most appropriate to celebrate a Mass or a Liturgy of the Word. Where a significant number of people would not be able to partake of the communion, a Mass may seem to divide people rather than unite them. In such cases, a Liturgy of the Word (without communion) may be preferable.
- ♦ Consult the liturgical calendar when choosing the date for your class or school liturgy. The chosen liturgical day will belong to a liturgical season and have a particular liturgical colour. When scheduling school events such as commissioning ceremonies, it is best to avoid significant days such as Ash Wednesday which have their own associated ritual celebrations.
- ♦ If a Mass is to be celebrated, it is important to consult the *DMC* which contains fundamental principles for celebrating liturgy with young people. It offers possibilities for teachers, clergy and lay leaders, not just for celebrating Mass with children but also for other experiences of prayer and liturgy in schools, parishes and homes. The directory is a formal liturgical document approved by Pope Paul VI in 1973 and serves as a supplement to the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)*.
- ♦ It is important to talk with the presiding priest at the outset of liturgy planning and then towards the end when things are being finalised. Share with the priest the things that are of interest to the children at present so that his preaching may engage them at



the appropriate developmental level. For celebrating with young children, it is advised that the priest use the *Eucharistic Prayers for Masses with Children* which is composed in language that is readily understandable. The texts have been approved by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and confirmed by the Holy See.

The Liturgical Space and Environment

- ◆ Consider where the liturgy will be celebrated. A classroom or school hall can help to link liturgy and life but it can be difficult to create and maintain a sense of the sacred. Outdoor settings highlight the wonder of God's creation but can be distracting and make it difficult for readers and musicians to be heard. The parish church offers a sacred space and is usually to be preferred if Mass is being celebrated. Whichever space is chosen, ensure there is room for processions to move through the gathered assembly for the entrance procession, for readers approaching the front, for the procession of bread and wine, and for people to move up for communion.
- ◆ The worship space can be decorated with reference to the liturgical colours of the season. Since everyone celebrates the liturgy, it is advisable to decorate the whole worship space with colour.
- ◆ Creative use of sacred symbols (cross, candles, water, flowers, incense) and seasonal colours stimulates an appreciation of 'the wonderful works of God' (DMC 35).
- ◆ It is not appropriate to adorn the altar with school colours or to place school mascots around the altar. This applies equally to the school crest, motto and flag.

The Scripture Readings

- ◆ Readings are to be selected from the Lectionary for Masses with Children (LMC) which uses the Contemporary English Version. The children's lectionary provides a simpler translation of the same passage from the adult Lectionary for Mass for Sundays, feasts and solemnities. However, the LMC does not assign specific readings to weekdays. Instead, it offers various themes to choose from for each liturgical season. There are 43 themes for Ordinary Time, 9 themes for Lent, 8 for Easter and 4 for Advent.
- ◆ If your liturgy is being celebrated during Lent, you will also notice that Gospel Acclamations do not use the word 'Alleluia'. This is something to check in the chosen musical setting.
- ◆ Introductory comments may precede the readings and help the children to listen more fruitfully, either by explaining the context of the reading or by foreshadowing the story itself.

The Prayers of Intercession

- ◆ Write prayers of intercession that arise out of the children's experience and reflect the life and concerns of the school community.
- ◆ Ideally, the children are involved in this process (DMC 29).

Symbol and Ritual

- ◆ Items or symbols that represent the community are best brought forward in the entrance procession and placed near the altar or at another suitable place. These symbols are not to be brought forward in the procession of gifts with the bread and wine.
- ◆ The visual elements (especially the sacramental symbols) of the liturgy are also given great prominence in liturgies with children (DMC 35). Introducing other visual elements that are meaningful for the children and which allow them to perceive the beauty of God's creation will support them in their prayer. Creating links between liturgy and life is vital. *The liturgy should never appear as something dry and merely intellectual* (DMC 35).

Preparing Children to Celebrate the Liturgy

- ◆ Teach children about the Mass prior to their experience of it. Explain that the purpose of the liturgy is to offer thanks and praise to God, and so they are invited to join in the spoken responses and in the singing with full voice.
- ◆ A good children's Mass book such as *Lift Up Your Hearts*, published by Liturgy Brisbane, will be invaluable in preparing children and in helping them to respond and participate at Mass.



- ◆ Talk about rituals in everyday life, explain how we use symbols and ask them to look out for particular symbols or events during the liturgy.
- ◆ Talk about the readings that will be proclaimed in the liturgy so that children can more easily pay attention to making meaning of the texts.
- ◆ Rehearse the various postures of kneeling, standing, processing with all students.
- ◆ Rehearse the hymns and other sung parts of the Mass so that children can sing confidently throughout the liturgy. They can also be reminded that they are joining in a group activity of

praising God, leading the community of parents and other visitors who may take part in the celebration – but it is not a concert.

- ◆ Rehearse with children who will proclaim the readings. Review the pronunciation of words and give them an opportunity to practise at the ambo. Children should read from a lectionary or a binder that contains the readings, rather than a loose piece of paper.
- ◆ Rehearse the sign of peace, demonstrating appropriate ways for children to smile and shake hands without becoming overly energetic and finding it hard to resettle.
- ◆ Remind children that during the times when they are not joining in the spoken responses or singing, they are to remain in prayerful silence to create a sense of reverence and respect. Some children find it especially difficult to be still and may need personal attention to help them focus on the liturgy and take part.
- ◆ Holy Communion is a particularly sacred time in the liturgy that invites stillness and prayer. To prevent chatter arising during this time, children can be reminded that the assembly participates throughout the communion procession by either singing the communion hymn as they process up to receive communion and after they return to their places or saying a quiet prayer to God (*GIRM* 86).
- ◆ Teachers and parents have a key role in modelling reverent silence and active participation throughout the liturgy.

Assigning Roles and Ministries

- ◆ Some students may take up specific roles during the celebration – for example, altar serving, singing, playing musical instruments, reading and bringing up the gifts of bread and wine. These roles are in service of the community and not to be viewed as a performance.
- ◆ Children who are not Catholics can be members of the music ministry, they can help to prepare the liturgical space, they can come forward for a blessing at Communion, they can be part of a group who consider themes for the General Intercessions, they can listen to the prayers and Scripture readings and join in the singing with other members of the community.
- ◆ When selecting those who will read from the Lectionary, it is appropriate to choose baptised children who are able to understand the text and proclaim it well.
- ◆ Altar servers and those who bring forward the gifts of bread and wine will be children who have made their First Communion.
- ◆ It is important to remember that everyone participates in the celebration but not everyone performs a ministry; ministries are not multiplied needlessly for the sake of involving more students.

Liturgical Music

- ◆ Try to have live music wherever possible which will draw the children into participation. Older children may be able to form part of the music ministry alongside teachers.
- ◆ Be familiar with which parts of the Mass are designed to be sung, for example, the Responsorial Psalm, the Gospel Acclamation, the acclamations in the Eucharistic Prayer.

- ◆ In cases where school liturgies or sacramental celebrations are celebrated with the parish community, it can be helpful to introduce some hymns that the children sing into the parish repertoire before the joint celebration, and conversely to teach the children some of the hymns that are familiar to the parish community. A strong parish-school relationship helps to foster the full participation of all at these shared liturgies.
- ◆ Singing is given great importance in all liturgical celebrations, but it is of particular importance in liturgies celebrated with children given their special affinity for music (*DMC* 30). Those with musical gifts might lead the community in singing or playing musical instruments.

Things to Consider when Finalising the Liturgy

- ◆ The *DMC* emphasises the importance of silence in providing opportunities for children to meditate on what they have heard and to pray to God in their hearts (*DMC* 37). Set aside specific moments for silence, especially after the homily and after communion.
- ◆ Ensure that language used in introductory comments and in the Prayers of Intercession is inclusive of those who will gather.
- ◆ Give consideration to the various cultures represented amongst the children and think about how this might find expression in music, the choice of symbols in the entrance procession, or in the general intercessions.
- ◆ The presentation of awards, investiture of school leaders or school announcements are best done after the final blessing and dismissal. Then, having been asked to refrain from taking photographs during the liturgy as a sign of reverence for the sacred action, parents may take photos and applaud as appropriate.
- ◆ As a result of their experience at Mass, a young person may come forward and say, *I want to receive communion too. Why can't I?* It will be important to talk with this child and their parents after the liturgy at an appropriate time, and to put them in touch with the parish staff who can inform them about the sacramental preparation process.

While planning a school liturgy may previously have seemed a daunting task, liturgy preparation tools such as Liturgy Brisbane's *Liturgia* make the process of selecting texts, prayers and readings very simple. Booklets can be prepared with just a few clicks to enhance the participation of the gathered assembly. An online course offered by Liturgy Brisbane provides basic formation for teachers and APREs and gives them confidence to prepare creative, vibrant liturgical experiences in the primary school. Ultimately, it is important to remember that a liturgical celebration is not a series of texts. Rather, it is a dynamic event which involves all the senses and invites children into a living encounter with God through their participation in the embodied action of worship.

■ Dr Clare Schwantes is director of Liturgy Brisbane and chair of the National Liturgical Council.

HIDDEN BODIES IN LITURGY

HOW DOES THE ORGANISATION WORK?

by Tom Elich

One of the great mysteries of religion – even for those who are a regular part of the parish Sunday Mass – is to understand how the liturgy is organised. What are all these different groups people talk about (often referring to them only by letters: NLC, BCL, ICEL and so forth)? Where do our liturgical books come from? Why does nothing seem to happen when we need change? Why do we use all these funny Latin names when we talk about liturgy documents?

Many of the prayers and patterns we use in the liturgy of the Mass and the sacraments are hundreds of years old. The liturgical books are compiled in Latin in Rome by the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (that is, the Vatican's liturgy department). This then is the basis for all the editions of liturgical books in different languages around the world. This Latin urtext is called the *editio typica* and it is a beautiful witness to the unity of the Roman rite around the world.

The Roman Missal contains all the prayers for the Mass, those that change with the feasts or seasons, and those that are common to all days.

The Lectionary contains all the Scripture readings we need for different days and occasions.

The Roman Ritual has the prayers and rites for the sacraments, funerals, blessings and other rites.

The Roman Pontifical contains the rites that are celebrated by a bishop, particularly confirmation and ordination, blessing and consecrating the holy oils, and formally instituting acolytes, lectors and catechists.

The Divine Office provides the cycle of psalms and other prayers and readings for the daily prayer of the Church (principally Morning and Evening Prayer, but also an Office of Readings, Prayer during the Day, and Night Prayer).

Finally there are various books containing music of antiphons and hymns.

Liturgy in the Vernacular

Translating the Latin liturgical books into the vernacular and adapting them to local cultures is the work of the bishops of the various countries, called bishops conferences (in Australia, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, ACBC).

In order to coordinate this work across the many countries that use English, sometimes as a second language, a group of English-speaking bishops at the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) formed an organisation called ICEL, the International Commission for English in the Liturgy. It enables cooperation between different countries, offering

international expertise in various disciplines. ICEL's work is a service for the individual bishops conferences – they then need to study it, add to it or adapt it, and approve it. In Australia, for example, we need to produce and incorporate texts for commemorations such as Mary MacKillop, Anzac Day and Australia Day.

Each bishops conference then sends the completed liturgical book to Rome, to the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. It is the task of the Dicastery to *confirm* the bishops' approval of liturgical translations, and to *recognise* any adaptations to local needs. This second procedure is a little stronger than the first in that it involves a review and evaluation. Both parts are meant to express the communion of the Church throughout the world.

When the books are returned by the Holy See (sometimes with suggestions or corrections), the bishops conference proceeds to publish the books for use in parish liturgy. Sometimes this whole process can take quite some time, especially if there is a difference of perspective between the Holy See and the local Church. Australia, for example, has been seeking a new translation for the Lectionary for about thirty years. It has been impossible to come to an agreement, though it looks as if this has at last been resolved. Even so, putting the book together, getting it approved by the ACBC and confirmed by the Holy See, and then having it published will still take a few years.

Commissions, Councils and Committees

As for other areas in Church life, the Australian bishops have organised some help in liturgy matters. There is a Bishops' Commission on the Liturgy (BCL) which does the hard work on behalf of the whole body of bishops. They are assisted by three councils made up of volunteers with expertise – clergy, religious and lay people. The principal advisory group is the National Liturgical Council (NLC), which has eight members from all parts of Australia. They are supported by a wider group of consultants. For matters specifically related to music, there is the National Liturgical Music Council (NLMC), and for matters related to church architecture and sacred art there is the National Liturgical Architecture and Art Council (NLAAC).

The work of the BCL and the three councils is coordinated by an Executive Secretary for Liturgy who is employed for three days a week; this person belongs to the National Office for Liturgy which, in addition to the Executive Secretary, receives secretarial support from the staff of the ACBC. The Executive Secretary also has the responsibility of resourcing and supporting individual dioceses.

Every diocese is meant to have a commission on the liturgy to promote the liturgical apostolate, along with commissions for liturgical music and art. These three will often be combined into one diocesan commission. Unfortunately, over the last couple of decades, many dioceses in Australia have closed their liturgical commission. Most of the capital cities still have one, but regional dioceses often do not. As at national level, so too the diocesan liturgy commission would often be supported by a liturgy office with people employed to educate the diocese in liturgy and sacraments and prepare liturgical ministers for their role. They would often be responsible, for example, for preparing and implementing a sacramental policy for the Christian initiation of children.

By way of example, Brisbane has an Archdiocesan Commission on the Liturgy (ACL) whose volunteer members meet four or five times a year. It is supported by

Liturgy Brisbane, the archdiocesan liturgy office which employs three full-time staff and one part time.

Finally, each parish is meant to have a Liturgy Committee. With the parish priest, it establishes patterns of celebrating the Eucharist and the other sacraments. It works with the musicians to develop a repertoire for singing at Mass, offers training and formation for liturgical ministers, collaborates with sacramental coordinators to initiate children, supports the Rite of the Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), and has a voice on the Parish Pastoral Council. Ideally there will be a two-way communication with the diocesan liturgy commission.

Liturgy Documents

There is a wide range of documents and policy statements to shape and direct the liturgy at parish, diocesan, national and international levels. It is important to identify the source for any document that is being cited. So, for example, the Plenary Council of the Catholic Church in Australia which concluded in 2022 produced a number of decrees some of which concern liturgical matters. Carriage of these issues will be the responsibility of the BCL with support from the NLC. But first they need to be confirmed by the Holy See. Already the NLC has established study groups to set directions for future action.

Official liturgy documents from Rome are often especially mystifying because they carry titles in Latin. There are literally thousands of them. It is not helpful to translate the names because they are just the first couple of words from the document. So the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council is called *Sacrosanctum Concilium* which just means 'This Sacred Council'. When giving a reference just the initials are generally used, SC. The 2017 document that revised the approval procedures for liturgical texts is called *Magnum Principium* which just means 'The Great Principle'. The title of Pope Francis' 2022 Apostolic Letter on how to understand Mystery in the liturgy, *Desiderio Desideravi*, just means 'I have earnestly desired'.

It will be obvious that it is not helpful to translate these titles because they do not tell anyone what the document is about. Instead, it is important to keep them in Latin so that they can be easily found on the internet. Put the title into a search engine and the whole text will be available, usually from the Vatican website in English.

Liturgy Study Groups

Finally, there are many liturgical groups and bodies devoted to the study of liturgy. Some are official. The English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC) was established in 1985 and is made up of various national bodies from different Christian Churches. The original impetus came from ICEL and its focus was to produce a common corpus of liturgical prayers (Our Father, Gloria, Creed, etc). ELLC also worked with the Revised Common Lectionary based on the Roman Lectionary. It was dealt a severe blow when ICEL, who had provided the ELLC secretariat, was forced to withdraw from ecumenical activity by the 2001 Roman document, *Liturgiam Authenticam* (LA).

The Australian Consultation on the Liturgy (ACOL) is an ecumenical body whose representatives are formally appointed by the member Churches. ACOL represents Australia on ELLC. Over the years at their annual meeting, this group has worked with common texts used in all the Churches, worked on guidelines for multi-faith worship,

and studied common patterns and differences across the various denominations.

Other groups are made up of scholars or other interested people. Societas Liturgica is an ecumenical, international association of liturgy scholars most of whom would teach at a university. Founded in 1967, it holds a biennial congress on a particular theme in various parts of the world at which members present research in the three official languages: English, French and German. There are generally a couple of hundred participants. It publishes a journal *Studia Liturgica*.

Another well-known scholarly association devoted to studying public worship is the North American Academy of Liturgy (NAAL). Founded in 1973, it is both ecumenical and inter-faith. Its annual conference held in early January comprises plenary sessions and twenty 'seminars' or working groups which share research on particular topics. The corresponding body in Australia – called the Australian Academy of Liturgy (AAL) – is much smaller and meets in state based 'chapters'. It organises a national biennial conference and publishes a journal, the *Australian Journal of Liturgy*.

Other significant liturgy journals include *Worship* published quarterly by the monks of St John's Abbey, Collegeville; *Pastoral Liturgy* published by Liturgy Training Publications in Chicago; *Liturgy* published in USA by The Liturgical Conference; in Australia, *Liturgy News* published by Liturgy Brisbane; in New Zealand, *Liturgy* published by the Liturgy Centre in the Diocese of Auckland; *Music and Liturgy* published in England by the Society of Saint Gregory; *La maison-Dieu* published in French by the national service for pastoral and sacramental liturgy of the French bishops conference; *Questions liturgiques/Studies in Liturgy* published in Belgium; *Ephemerides liturgicae* published in Rome carries articles in Italian and English; *Ecclesia Orans* published by the pontifical liturgy faculty of Sant'Anselmo in Rome; *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft* published by the Institute for Liturgical Studies at the University of Freiburg in Switzerland; *Liturgie und Kultur* now published online by the Liturgische Konferenz in Hannover.

Complicated

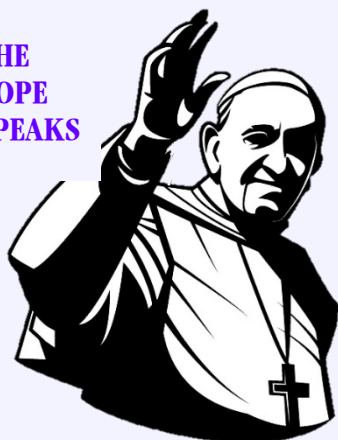
If you have read your way through to this point, you may well be asking why it has to be so complicated. Is it all necessary?

Within the Catholic Church, it is important to balance the local and the universal. We are in communion with Catholic communities in every part of the globe yet, in our parish churches, the liturgy has to be an authentic expression of who we are before God. That is why we have organisations at each level that cooperate with one another. Beyond the bounds of the Catholic Church, there is much that the Churches can learn from one another and many ways we can be of mutual help. Liturgy is a key area to foster Christian unity.

Learning all about the liturgy can be daunting. But everyone can make a start so that a growing understanding leads to a deepening appreciation. Ultimately, our worship is a response to all the wonderful things God does for us. We look at the world with eyes of wonderment and we turn to God with thanksgiving in our hearts.

■ Tom Elich, fifty years a priest of the Archdiocese of Brisbane, has, among other responsibilities, been with Liturgy Brisbane for 35 years.

THE POPE SPEAKS



Pope Francis addressed the gathering of the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in Rome on 8 February 2024. He spoke about opportunities for liturgical formation.

Liturgical formation is necessary, that is, formation in the liturgy and from the liturgy... It is not a specialisation for a few experts, but rather an inner disposition of all the people of God. This naturally does not exclude a priority in the formation of those who, by virtue of the sacrament of Holy Orders, are called to be mystagogues, that is, to take the faithful by the hand and accompany them in their knowledge of the holy mysteries. I encourage you to continue in your efforts so that pastors may know how to lead the people to the good pasture of liturgical celebration, where the proclamation of Christ who died and rose again becomes a concrete experience of his life-transforming presence...

We must at the same time think of [paths] intended for the people of God, starting with the assemblies that gather on the Lord's Day and the feasts of the liturgical year: these constitute the first concrete opportunity for liturgical formation. And it can be the same with moments when more people participate in the celebrations and their preparation: I am thinking of patronal feasts, or the sacraments of Christian initiation. Prepared with pastoral care, they become favourable occasions for people to rediscover and delve into the meaning of celebrating the mystery of salvation today.

ERASURE OF BAPTISM

A request from a person in France to erase their name from the Church baptismal register has been refused not only by the Church but also by the Conseil d'État, the French supreme court for administrative justice. This judgement was given on 2 February 2024 and is the first time laws relating to the protection of public records have been applied to Church registers in France. Baptism is given only once and the entry in the baptismal register records an historical event that cannot be erased. The record may become necessary if the person were to rejoin the Church or seek a Church marriage. This ruling follows a similar judgement in Ireland some months ago.

The usual practice is to make a note in the register to the effect that the person has decided to leave the Church. A diocesan official in France pointed out that, in response to a request for 'de-baptism', the diocese sends the person a brief acknowledgment of the request, indicating that no effects of the baptism would apply in the future, nor would any baptismal certificate henceforth be issued.

In Belgium, however, a government data protection agency has ruled that an individual's personal data rights override the Church's interest and directed that the Diocese of Ghent remove the person's name from the Church register. The Church in Belgium is appealing the decision. Laws relating to data protection are European legislation and, they say, should apply in the same way across the European Union.

IN MEMORIAM



KARL-EDMUND PRIER, German Jesuit priest who was a missionary in Indonesia for 60 years, died on 21 January 2024 at the age of 86. He was a pioneer of the inculturation of church music. With local composer Paul Widyawan, he founded the Liturgical Music Centre in Yogyakarta in 1971. He published *Madah Bakti* in 1980,

a church hymnal using Javanese, Batak and Flores musical styles. He assisted the Bishops' Liturgical Commission in liturgical music and taught at the seminary. In May 2023, the Indonesian Institute of the Arts where he taught for 33 years awarded him an honorary doctorate.



JAMES (JAKE) EMPEROR SJ died on 24 February 2024 at the age of 90. He taught liturgy for twenty-five years at the Jesuit School of Theology and the Graduate Theological Union, both in Berkeley, California. For thirty years he also worked at San Fernando Cathedral in San Antonio, Texas. He founded the Institute for Spirituality and Worship and was a member of Societas Liturgica.



Dr ROBERT BOUGHEN OBE (1929–2024) began as organist and choirmaster at St John's Anglican Cathedral in Brisbane in 1960 and held the post for over 44 years.

He oversaw the rebuilding of the cathedral organ in 1971 and has often been a consultant on organ design and installation over half a century. He was also a composer and one of Australia's most remarkable organists in both civic and church contexts. For over 25 years, he taught music at the University of Queensland and was both University Organist and Brisbane City organist for many years. He was involved with almost every church music and organ society in the country.

HANDS,

touching hands, reaching out,
touching me, touching you.

Neil Diamond, Sweet Caroline (1969)

*Our
Cover*

Liturgy is not a page with words or texts.
It is the action of the People of God at worship.
Human touch and gesture are a key part of liturgy.

RE-OPENING NOTRE DAME, PARIS



Archbishop Laurent Ulrich of Paris announced in an enthusiastic pastoral letter dated 2 February 2024 plans for re-opening Notre Dame cathedral after the 2019 fire. Towards the end of November there will be a solemn procession through the streets to bring back the statue of Mary and Child to the cathedral – it survived the flames. Opening activities will begin on the solemn feast of the Immaculate Conception (8 December 2024) and festivities will culminate on Pentecost next year (8 June 2025). There will be a formal handing over by the State (which owns the building) to the Church (its occupant). The pipe organ will be blessed, the *Te Deum* sung, and Vespers will be celebrated. During the first Mass on the Second Sunday of Advent, the altar will be consecrated. The following months of celebration and praise will be marked by diocesan pilgrimages and cultural events.

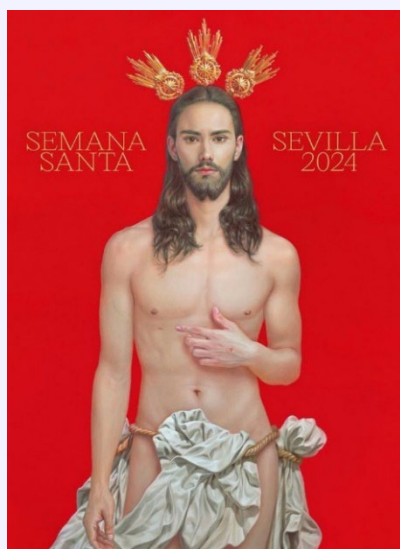
The archbishop said Notre Dame was there for all, believers and unbelievers alike; it is a symbol of hope for the city. He paid tribute to all those who had contributed to its rebuilding and urged that its re-opening be a truly communal event for everyone. He imagined this time as a renewal for the Church and all its members, young and old. There will be catechesis on the sacraments and a harmonisation of activities with the Jubilee year of 2025.

SYRO-MALABAR CONFLICT UNRESOLVED

Hopes were raised in January for a resolution of a long-standing conflict when a new archbishop, Raphael Thattil, was appointed to the Syro-Malabar Archdiocese of Ernakulam-Angalamy in India. The conflict between the traditional Mass facing the people and the reform of their local Synod in which the priest has to turn away during the Liturgy of the Eucharist has caused serious rupture, leading to the closure of the cathedral and suspension even of Christmas Masses over the last two years. The decades old dispute was reactivated in 2021 when the Synod insisted on implementing the reformed rite.

A resolution has still not been achieved. The new archbishop with the support of the Synod appealed for obedience which the vast majority of parishes simply ignored. The letter was read out in just ten of the 323 churches. It is a pity that a resolution is still being attempted by the use of authority instead of dialogue, and that uniformity is deemed more important than unity.

SEVILLE HOLY WEEK POSTER



This year's poster for Seville's Holy Week processions and festivities has provoked quite some controversy. Some have been offended by the image of the risen Christ, calling it sexualised, camp and effeminate.

It is the work of well-known local Spanish artist Salustiano Garcia who used his own son as the model. It is intended to show 'the radiant side of Holy Week'. The artist said it was 'gentle, elegant and beautiful'

DAVID HAAS MUSIC

Notwithstanding plausible allegations of sexual assault, no criminal charges have been brought against composer David Haas. However, his two major publishers in the USA – GIA Publications in Chicago and Oregon Catholic Press (OCP) in Portland – have withdrawn their support for Haas and the listing of his works in their catalogues. There is also the duty of care to survivors of sexual abuse who may be put at risk of further harm through hearing or singing music by Haas.

Because his work is still found in published collections of liturgical music, including *As One Voice* and *Catholic Worship Book II*, parishes continue to ask about using this music. Any work of art has an existence of its own, independent of the person who created it. Each song could therefore be judged on its own merits. However, the Bishops Commission for Liturgy and the National Liturgical Music Council have said it would be inappropriate for the compositions of David Haas to be used in the liturgy. It would be wise to drop this music from the parish repertoire.



and created with 'deep respect'. He insisted that *there is nothing revolutionary in the painting. There is contemporaneity, but all the elements that I have used are elements that have been used in the last seven centuries in sacred art.* It was well received by city officials and organisers at

its unveiling on 27 January.

By way of comparison, Garcia cited the example of the 16th century painter, El Greco, whose resurrection painting is held in the Prado in Madrid. It raises questions for us about our image of Christ and the way in which Christ ought to be portrayed. Is it acceptable to present him as a white European? What makes an image beautiful? What makes it spiritual or sacred?

'CHURCH EVERYDAY' IN KOREA



The pandemic has had a significant and on-going effect on the Church in South Korea. Work and so many other aspects of life were done remotely via live video and people got into the habit. This is continuing.

Church attendance – in a country known for its very active parish life – has not bounced back. For many it is more convenient to attend Mass online and this in turn has impacted ministry and volunteering. Some have suggested a 'hybrid church' which actively embraces and utilises online methods as the way forward.

The Korean Catholic Research Centre released in January a 300-page report addressing the problem and proposing a 'Church Everyday' model. It acknowledges that the online spiritual life developed during the pandemic is valuable and must not be lost. It can be a lifeline for the sick or elderly among others. But the report urges parishes to find the right balance for a 'Church Everyday' between online and face-to-face activities.

Internet apps have been developed to maintain contact between parishioners, giving them news and accompanying them with prayer and daily readings. Korea is good at these things, why not use them? But they should complement and not substitute for actual gatherings of Catholic people.

The report recommends a range of possibilities such as outdoor activities, meal gatherings, learning groups for different age groups in a variety of contexts. One priest noted that young people in particular can feel lonely and isolated. He has established a regular post-Mass buffet meal with music where young people can meet, talk and have fun. This, he said, is community, the spirit of a parish.

EMBEDDING AUDIO IN POWERPOINT

When a musician is not available, recorded music is sometimes played to support the sung participation of the liturgical assembly. Churches that use projection screens are tempted to embed audio recordings into PowerPoint or other presentation apps so that the song lyrics automatically change as the recording plays. This practice is not legally permitted under Australian copyright law or church music copyright licences. A separate 'synchronisation licence' would need to be negotiated with the publisher of each song. Discussions are underway to find a solution to this issue but in the meantime, song lyric screen presentations should be advanced manually while the recording is played separately.

GROWING ADULT INITIATION



The Catholic community in Malaysia has witnessed a growing demand for adult initiation over recent years. This year, more than 1700 adults will be baptised, confirmed and welcomed to holy communion at the Easter Vigil. Across the nine dioceses in the country, these catechumens have been moving through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, welcomed and accompanied by members of the ecclesial community which has supported their process of discernment. Catholics in Malaysia, less than 10% of the population, number about 1.3 million.

DEEDS AND WORDS

A new Vatican document released on 3 February 2024 insists on accurate deeds and words (*Gestis Verbisque*) in order to make a valid sacrament. The note from the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith states that the faithful 'observance of both matter and form has always been required for the validity of the celebration'. The document follows earlier rulings that changes in the formula for baptism invalidate the rite: for example, saying *I baptise you in the name of the Creator...* or *In the name of your father and mother, we baptise you...* This created major problems recently in the USA where a priest had been using *We baptise you...* for decades, rendering other sacraments (confirmation, marriage and even ordination) also invalid.

In other areas of pastoral and liturgical action, there is ample room for creativity and flexibility, but the sacramental formulae belong not to the individual or the local community but to the whole Church acting in the person of Christ. It is not the 'we' of the community but the 'I' of Christ. The document urges a mature and authentic respect for the Church's discipline that sets aside on the one hand rigid rubricism and on the other unbridled creativity.

The document provides a succinct summary of how sacraments work.

- The *matter* of the sacrament is the human action through which Christ acts. It comprises a material element (water, bread, wine, oil) and gesture (sign of the cross, laying on hands, immersion, consent, anointing).
- The *form* of the sacrament is the word which gives meaning to the matter.
- The *intention* of the minister links matter and form to make the sacred sign we call sacrament. This is not just pastoral good will but rather the intention to do what the Church does.

The sacrament is inserted into a liturgical celebration in which God's people are filled with the Holy Spirit and encounter God in Christ. This must, without prejudice to the substantial unity of the Roman Rite, be open to the diversity of different groups, regions and peoples (SC 38). It is here that the presider meets the pastoral and spiritual needs of the people.

The document concludes with some reflections on presiding at the liturgy and the 'art of celebrating'.

VIEW FROM MOUNT CLARENCE



by Gerry Crooks

Being dragged along to Mass each week (for fear of mortal sin, of course), commandeered into altar-serving and, in my case, playing – nay, pumping – an ancient wheezing harmonium (*Je-sus, My Lo-rd, My Go-d, My Au-ll*), were all memories of my growing up Catholic.

The local ‘church’ was a double classroom at my small Catholic primary school, hastily converted in preparation for the forthcoming Sunday Masses. My single mum reasoned that, because she had spent a hard-earned ‘guinea’ a month on piano lessons for me from a gentle yet somewhat formidable Mercy sister named Mother Cecilia (the name and ministry synonymous!), then I was beholden to her to use the results of these lessons, and this meant playing at Mass. Mine wasn’t to choose!

But there was something else that was dear to Mum’s heart. She would insist that we kneel down before bed each night and say the rosary. Now this was a practice, I have to confess, which was not terribly relevant for one who was beginning to embrace the heady pop culture days of the 1960s.

Reflecting years later, I think there was something that resonated deep in my

mother’s heart that was forever to remain part of who my brother and I were and where we had come from. From my earliest memories, my mother Patricia, whose maiden name was Mooney, would tell me stories about her great grandfather. He apparently was the first Catholic in the then remote settlement of Albany on the far south coast of Western Australia.

In this tiny settlement on King George Sound, just a few short years after the foundation of Swan River Colony, a young soldier from the 21st Royal North British Fusiliers was appointed as the fledgling town’s policeman, a position he would hold with distinction until his retirement in 1868. His name was Lawrence Mooney. Not only was he admired for his dedication to his job, but he would go on to be remembered as one of the key figures in the beginnings of the Catholic Church in that State.

Lawrence hailed from County Meath in Ireland. After a period of treacherous travel and overseeing convicts in Van Dieman’s Land, he arrived in Albany somewhere around 1833 with his wife Elizabeth and their two small children. A simple soldier and family man, his unheralded arrival and subsequent contribution would turn out to be a watershed in the story of the Catholic Church for Mooney was the first Catholic in this region.



His story was later told by Cardinal Moran in his *History of the Catholic Church in Australia* (1896). Then, just over a century after the foundation of the colony, he was referred to by Archbishop James Duhig in a homily in 1930 at the opening of the recently completed St Mary’s Cathedral, Perth. (The homily entitled *The Grand Cathedral of the West* was later recorded in a collection of his sermons.) The story of this man Mooney has since been the subject of significant research by the Albany Historical Society, Albany Public Library and the local Catholic Church of St Joseph.

Cardinal Moran relates: [*Lawrence Mooney*] with his family was stationed at Albany many years before it was visited by a priest. Nothing could exceed the desolation of the settlement in those early

days and Mr Mooney relates that he was accustomed on Sundays to climb to the summit of Mt Clarence reciting the rosary and shedding bitter tears at the thought that there was not a priest or altar of Holy Sacrifice within a thousand miles of him; and turning towards the west, he would unite in spirit with his distant countrymen and pray fervently to God that he might not be left in such desolation.

That arduous climb through the rugged bushland, granite boulders and rough scree to the top of Mt Clarence is the story not only of a particular time in history; it is the story of Church and the centrality of sacrament in Catholic life.

There is some conjecture about when the first Mass was actually celebrated in Albany and who the celebrant was but as to where it was celebrated there is little disagreement. On a ridge above Princess Royal Harbour (the inner harbour of King George Sound) is a formation of 'balancing' granite rocks. This formation came to be known as Mass Rock. (The idea of a 'mass rock' was not unknown in Irish circles, used as they were in the home country for the clandestine celebrations of Mass during the religious persecutions at the time and in preceding centuries.) On 4 November 1841, Eucharist was celebrated for the first time at Mass Rock by the newly-arrived Fr John Brady (later to become Vicar General and then, in 1845, the first Bishop of Perth). That 'first Mass' is today recognised by many at the establishment of the Catholic Church in Western Australia.



Duhig recounted in his 1930 homily: [*Lawrence Mooney's*] prayer was heard. He lived to behold 'the tabernacle of God with men' (sic) and to see the tears of sorrow that he shed on that mountain supplanted by the joyful spectacle of the spiritual wilderness of Western Australia turned into a smiling garden cultivated by zealous priests and nuns.

The small Catholic community, led by Mooney who had so earnestly prayed for a priest, finally came together as the Body of Christ in the Eucharist, for them the fulfilment of everything that their faith was about.

Local historian, the late Dora Bulbeck, in a paper delivered to the Albany Historical Society in 1967, wrote: *From the local Church record, we learn that all baptisms and marriages were performed in the Mooney home until 1860 when the*

first Catholic marriage was performed in the Catholic Church in the town of Albany – indeed a testament to the faith of the man and the impact of his presence. Is this not also a mirroring of beginnings of the Church itself?

What was so deeply at the heart of Mooney's life that it defined his Catholicism? What motivated him to trek up the heights of Mt Clarence each Sunday, praying the rosary for a priest to come to their settlement? And, perhaps most significantly, what is the link that sacramentally unites his story to who we are as Catholics today?

Since very earliest times, Christians have gathered to celebrate Eucharist. Our Catholic identity finds its meaning in gathering to share in the Body and Blood of the Lord: 'Do this in memory of me' has been the imperative that commands us in our faith.

Throughout the story of Christianity, we are often inspired by those who have gone before us whose lives have been marked not necessarily by personal greatness, notoriety nor even, dare I say it, saintliness, but by simplicity, holiness, and loyalty to the very essence of our faith. In spite of difficulty, deprivation and 'desolation', the story of the Gospel and the intrinsic action of sacrament is at the heart of our existence as Catholics.

It is quite clear that the Mass was central to Lawrence Mooney's identity as a Catholic. To his dying day in 1895 (as his death notice relates), he was committed to ensuring that Mass would continue to be celebrated as it should be, not on a rock in the bush, but on the table, an altar, in the newly-built St Joseph's Church at Albany.

I think Patricia, my mother, had some innate understanding that this was part of her own story too. She didn't express it much in words, but I suppose she didn't need to. I think she knew that her nightly saying of the rosary, the hardship she endured bringing us up as a single mum, and her simple faith-filled Catholicity were part of the spiritual inheritance of her great grandfather. I am sure she hoped and prayed this would one day also be a part of the story of her children.

Is this what Eucharist is about? I somehow think it is.

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Anne Y Koester, *Children and Youth in the Catechumenate: Forming Young Disciples for Mission*

Collegeville, Liturgical Press, 2021. 100 pp.

by James Cronin

The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) is the finest flowering of the liturgical renewal of Vatican II. No other rite envisages such a variety of roles – sponsors and godparents, catechists and clergy – in the midst of the whole community: *the initiation of catechumens is a gradual process that takes place within the community of the faithful* (RCIA 4). The RCIA also stresses that head, heart and behaviour are blended together in the journey into Christ. Anne Koester makes the same point by calling the needed approach *catechetical, communal, liturgical, and apostolic* (p. 5). The RCIA is not a priest holding lessons in a private room, nor a program of weekly catechesis; rather it is an insertion into the year-round life of the Christian community, a sharing of everyone's ideas and experiences. The conversion process entails listening to all the voices, like Pope Francis' emphasis on synodality.

This user-friendly little book explores in the first part questions of conversion, discernment and faith, roles and responsibilities. Who are these young people and what questions and challenges do they face? In the subsequent parts, Anne Koester goes through the various stages and phases of the RCIA journey, examining what might happen and how it can be done.

Sadly, the RCIA no longer seems to operate in many parishes; one diocese with well over 100 parishes mustered fewer than 20 candidates for the recent Rite of Election at the cathedral! Why is it so? A big factor must be rampant

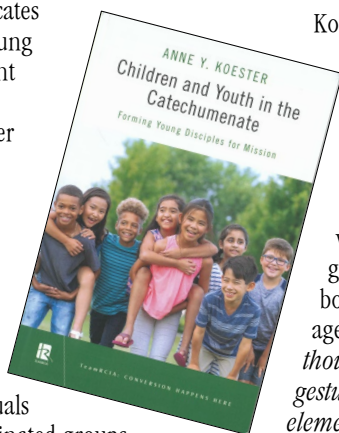
individualism: *Not only do we need to find ways to engage the young catechumens in the community, but we also need to educate and motivate the community to meet their obligations toward the catechumens. This is no easy task* (p. 77).

Koester indicates ways in which young catechumens might join with existing ministries of prayer and outreach, including works of mercy and justice. In our parish, I find that people are doing much in these areas, but mainly as individuals rather than coordinated groups.

In my experience, people are reticent about attending church meetings and not much attracted to sharing dreams and hopes.

Koester gives a fine outline of what pre-catechumenate sessions for children and teens should look like: welcome and prayer, sharing of experiences and personal history (*discovering being discovered* by God); Bible proclamation (including echoing some Bible words and phrases); introducing liturgy (including church seasons, prayer styles, and practising oft-used phrases and gestures); and question time. I remember long ago being excited to join a discussion group, one of the first chances I ever had to share faith and life with fellow Catholics outside of family and seminary. Sadly, most Catholics don't venture into this arena very easily or readily.

Vital to all training for the apostolate is discernment. This goes right back to the earliest Christian centuries. Hippolytus wrote in the early third century: *When those to be baptised have been selected, their life is to be examined: have they lived rightly during their catechumenate? Have they respected widows, visited the sick, practised all the good works?* Koester asks: *What do the young seekers ask about themselves, and what do we notice about them? Do they feel energised, joyful, at peace.... or do they feel a sense of dis-ease, hesitation, or confusion... We rejoice with them when they feel eager and ready to move another step closer to baptism, but we also need to respect hesitancy... None of this can be rushed; there are no shortcuts to the font* (p. 57). Not rushing to the font



is a constant refrain for this author. There is less pressure these days for parents to put children through sacramental programs in lockstep with their classmates, but still we all assume that they will be initiated by next Easter at the latest!

Koester's checklist for an engaging Easter Vigil is excellent. Reflecting on my own practice, I felt most remiss about the following: *an impassioned singing of the Exsultet; a strong proclamation of the scriptural texts* (p. 94); and the various usages of water, oil, and garments that accompany baptism for both adults and children of catechetical age. *Full, well-prepared, and thoughtful movements, proclamations, gestures, objects, and sacramental elements support the right and duty of those gathered to actively participate and encounter the presence of Christ in the liturgy. We should want nothing less for the elect on the day they become one with us in the Body of Christ* (p. 95).

Behind the wisdom of this book is fine theology: *What comes to mind when you are asked to describe faith? A set of concepts about what Christians believe? Something we are to memorise, or something to be lived? Is faith acquired through instruction, or is it a gift that is planted in the depths of every human heart, even if unexpressed* (p. 33)? The book quotes Mark Searle: *To come to true faith is to experience the saving presence of God in our lives as pure gift* (p. 33). Our job is to *listen, be patient, and remember that all this is at God's initiative. We can only offer our hospitality, availability, reassurance, and respect for the freedom each candidate has to respond to God's call to faith* (p. 39).

Recently I was helping someone in poor health do their shopping, and when there was a sudden collapse at the checkout, the shop assistants' response was immediate and caring. Somehow we all recognize the greater importance of caring and performing 'good works'. Liturgy is a vital way to prepare for this. *I am committed to the Church's vision of catechesis and faith formation that is rooted in the liturgy and in apostolic mission. This approach fosters in the catechumens a desire to prepare for Sunday and helps them to see the connections between Sunday and the rest of the week* (p. 73).

I recommend this friendly and informative book to all who are leaders in parishes!



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