

## Spring 2018

Welcome to this, the first in our quarterly series of Liturgy Office newsletters. The intention is to keep you abreast of what's happening on the 'liturgical front' for the coming months with resources and information, along with a little catechesis and some practical suggestions, to hopefully enhance the liturgical celebrations in our parishes. We've included some suggested Intercessions for Sundays throughout the year and this resource will grow as the liturgical year progresses. Do keep abreast of what is happening by looking at this section of the website on a regular basis.

Having just celebrated the Feast of Christmas and the Epiphany, we now turn our thoughts to Lent and Eastertide and have prepared a number of resources which we hope will enable you to celebrate these seasons fully. These include information about Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Lent itself, the Easter Triduum – and a whole host more. In addition to the many resources you will find under *Feasts, Saints and Seasons* on the website here are some other articles which may be of interest.

### LENTEN STATION MASSES

The early Christian practice of visiting the tombs of the martyrs around the city of Rome became the foundation of what we understand the Lenten *Station* Masses to be. In the early fourth century pilgrimage was made to the churches that housed the tombs of martyrs and saints so that the Christians of the city of Rome united with their bishop – the successor of St Peter – would meet together on a common journey of faith and prayer.

The *Roman Stational Masses* grew, largely under Pope Gregory the Great, but later additions have fleshed out the programme somewhat to encompass the whole season of Lent.

These *stations* are simply about pilgrimage and embarking upon a journey that has been walked by Christians across the centuries. It is a pilgrimage that is flavoured by Lenten penance and a searching, a longing, for God. There is also a consciousness of walking where others have trod before; we truly walk in the footsteps of holy men and women.

During this season of Lent, in our own diocesan *Year of Mission*, we are invited to allow this Roman pilgrimage to become our own. There is a simple invitation here for a diocesan family to embark upon its own journey into God, to seek him, to long for him, and to find him. Pilgrimage, by its very nature, demands we move, maybe step away, from what is familiar and what causes us to be settled. Pilgrimage takes us out of ourselves and allows us to encounter others, to walk with others as well as stepping into a richer understanding of the journey life draws us into towards God.

This Lent, these *stations* around our own diocese give us the chance to make something of that pilgrimage drawing us into prayer and communion with others in our diocese. The stopping points on this Lenten journey invite us to encounter the ever-present Lord who sends us out with that mission to proclaim good news to our world. We might not be visiting great Roman basilicas this Lent but we are a people of faith with a story, with a history, with a future... and that's Good News to be shared and lived. Our simple churches are the shelter

of God's people on their pilgrim journey. They are places where God is known, where God is loved, and where we appreciate his presence among us. They are places where we know we are welcomed, where we come to hear his word proclaimed to us, where we celebrate his love in the gift of the Eucharist, and where we gather as his people only to be sent out to be that Good News and that love through the lives we lead. They are places of gathering and of scattering... and that's what makes them holy places. In this Lenten journey we are invited to encounter the holiness of these places, the prayerfulness of these places so as to grow in holiness and grow in our own desire to be the very dwelling place of God.

**TO MARK THIS LENT** each Station is invited to celebrate the Mass of the day as they ordinarily would but to make use of a period of Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament before or after Mass, or an extended period of Adoration throughout the day. Why do this? Simply because we want also to look forward to the Eucharistic Congress in Liverpool this coming September. Finally, each Station is also encouraged to pray an appropriate part of the Liturgy of the Hours as part of their participation in this Lenten pilgrimage. The full set of Morning and Evening Prayer sheets are available as downloads from the Liturgy Office pages of the diocesan website.

You might invite neighbouring parishes to a Station Mass near you or to the one you are hosting so that this becomes a celebration of a wider community journeying towards baptismal renewal at Easter. The Good News of God's redeeming, reconciling love is not something we keep to ourselves, but something to live and share with those around us.

## **LENT AND THE RCIA**

Lent announces the 'final' period of preparation for those journeying towards baptism and initiation at Easter. It is the final period of preparation and an intense one, too. Far from being a *cramming session* where we try and fit in all those things we feel catechumens need to get to the font, it is a time of prayerful, reflective preparation, a time of listening to the Word of God and immersing oneself in love of the God who draws us towards himself. It is the period of *mystagogy* that offers the time for continuing formation, for learning, and for the shaping of living; Lent the time to ponder the call of the Lord and ponder the mysteries about to be entered into.

So how does Lent shape up, RCIA-wise? The Rite of Election, Scrutinies, Presentations, Holy Saturday Preparations and, finally, the Sacraments of Initiation at the Vigil.

**The Rite of Election** celebrates God's call. It is the Lord who calls us by name, the Lord who draws us and seeks us out. The Bishop, as shepherd of the community, echoing the call of the Lord, calls these men and women forward and invites them, on behalf of the community, to continue their preparation earnestly so that they might join us around the table of the Lord. And it is the Rite of Election (reminding the gathered community around the catechumens, also, of that continuing call to conversion) that ushers the catechumens (now the Elect) into the period of **Purification and Enlightenment**. The Rite makes clear the purpose of this Lenten period: *to uncover, then heal, all that is weak, defective or sinful in the hearts of the elect; to bring out, then strengthen, all that is upright, strong and good*. Accompanied by the Prayer of Exorcism, this beautiful period heightens the call of conversion, leaving behind all that is old and embracing more and more the new life of

Christ. It is the Church's prayer that offers them encouragement, affirmation and support as they continue their journey into Christ. **The Scrutinies** are celebration on Sundays 3, 4 and 5 when the Church gives us the option of using the Lectionary Readings from Year A – the woman at the well, the healing of the blind man, and the raising of Lazarus – water, light, and life. Celebrated with the community of faith, this community continues to walk with the elect who seek to join their number. Look at the prayers of these Scrutinies and Exorcism – 'protect them', 'free them', 'stand by them', 'heal them', 'enable them', 'guide them', 'rescue them', 'place them' – they speak of the Lord's loving presence in the lives of those he calls from imprisonment to freedom, from darkness to light, and from death to life.

But this period is also one of entrusting. The community entrusts its life of prayer and its *Symbol* of faith to the Elect through **Presentation of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer** (during week three and week five of Lent). The wonderful mystery of our salvation that we profess Sunday by Sunday is presented in the Creed; a realisation that we are the children of God where we call God our Father is reflected in that giving of the Lord's Prayer... and don't forget that within the Rite there is space for that recitation of the Creed on Holy Saturday in preparation for baptism.

Holy Saturday in the Rite is envisaged as a day of fasting, not necessarily just from food, but from the 'normalities' of the day. This is a day of prayer, of reflection, and a consciousness of God's nearness to them. There is room for the recitation of the Creed, the *Ephphetha* Rite and the touching of ears and lips in order both to hear and to proclaim the Good News, the giving of a name (if this is appropriate), and the anointing with the Oil of Catechumens... maybe the first time the Oil has been used since its blessing by the Bishop at the Chrism Mass – the community of faith which gathers - celebrating that we are an anointed people, a consecrated people, a priestly people - now seeks to anoint those who themselves seek Christ in Baptism.

We can so easily see the Rite as adding one more burden to an already full season. The Rite and the rites only allow us to see what we are being called back to – back to the God who calls us, who purifies us, who forgives and heals us, to re-create us and fashion us once again in his image so that, renewed and refreshed in the lifegiving waters of the font, we might once again proclaim to the world around us that light and life and salvation come to us in Christ. Allow the prayers of the RCIA to refocus your community's prayer and journey this Lent. May Lent be a *real* journey of renewal.

## The Liturgy of the Word in Lent

During Lent the readings for Sunday Mass are organised slightly differently from those in Ordinary Time, in the sense that they're organised according to different principles. For Sundays in Ordinary Time, the Gospels are chosen according to the principle of '*continual reading*', reading through one of the synoptic gospels in order. When we move into Lent the Gospel readings, as well as the Old Testament readings, are chosen because they reflect more of a theme across the Sundays.

The season of Lent which begins on Ash Wednesday ends as we begin the Triduum on Holy Thursday during Holy Week. That time period consists of six Sundays – six

Gospels, six sets of readings, across that six-week period. During Lent, the Church picks Old Testament narratives that reflect something of salvation history. What we find during the Lenten season is that if we read through the Old Testament readings in order, from one week to the next, they usually begin either in Genesis or the book of Exodus, and take us through major events in salvation history, such as Adam and Eve, the fall of Adam and Eve, the account of Abraham journeying to the promised land, or Abraham's vision. The narratives continue through the prophets where that longing and that waiting centres upon the One who will come to set God's people free. Lent has been a period where catechumens, people who were preparing to receive the sacraments of initiation - Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist - were being instructed in the *basics* of the faith. What they wanted to do during the Lenten season was take people back and open them up to the narrative of salvation, those major stories of the Old Testament that revealed God's working in our history, so that when they heard the Gospel be heard with understanding.

Let's explore what's offered us for our *diet* during Lent:

**Year A** centres so much around a journey to the font, to baptism. We journey with the Elect on their pilgrimage of **Initiation**. We listen (as we do each year) to the narrative of the Temptations and to the Transfiguration and then we immerse ourselves in a more baptismal narrative – the woman at the well (waters that quench thirst), the healing of the blind man (a light to enlighten the eyes), and the raising of Lazarus (a call out of the tombs of the dead to new life). Both the Old Testament and the New immerse us on a journey leading the Elect to the font of baptism and the baptised towards the renewal of our baptismal promises. Of course, we have the option of using this Year A readings each year when we have catechumens being accompanied on their journey towards Easter.

**Year B** seems to centre around the theme of **Covenant** – Covenants made, promises broken and Covenants renewed: Noah and his Ark speaking to us of a Covenant made with the whole of creation after the waters of the Flood (Sunday One); the narrative of Abraham's sacrifice on Sunday Two points us towards God's choice of Abraham and the promise of a mighty people that God will call his own – it's a reading of great promise; the gift of the Ten Commandments (Sunday Three) 'seals' the Covenant between God and his newly-freed people in the wilderness – this is the people God forms as his own and this is how they, for their part, are called to live; the reading on the Fourth Sunday of Lent is taken from the second book of Chronicles and it seems to speak of what happens when Covenants are not lived out. The author offers us the picture of decay, destruction and desolation. This is the fruit of a lack of faithfulness and a forgetfulness of the things of God. But this is 'undone' on Sunday Five as through the words of Jeremiah, God seeks to establish a new covenant with his people. The Law will not be written on tablets of stone but on the human heart. Once again, God's people will learn to know the Lord. Of course this leads us to our pilgrimage through Holy Week where we *remember* the making of a new and everlasting Covenant in the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus whose own blood seals that Covenant between God and his people.

As we listen to the Sunday readings during Lent we should keep that in mind. The Old Testament and Gospel readings do not necessarily go together as they do in the Sundays of Ordinary Time. The same thing will be true regarding the Epistles (Second Reading). For the second reading throughout the Sundays of Lent, the New Testament Epistle will be chosen according to a particular theme, usually repentance or sin, which will help us to bridge the gap between the events of Old Testament salvation history, and the good news of redemption from sin, which Jesus Christ will ultimately accomplish through the mystery of his passion, death, and resurrection. Seeing the Sunday readings of Lent in this way will help us to prepare us for an even more joyful celebration of the resurrection at Easter.

### Lent Readings for 2018 (Year B)

Sunday	1 <sup>st</sup> Reading	2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading	Gospel
1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent	Gen 9:8-15	1 Pet 3:18-22	Mark 1:12-15
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent	Gen 22:1-2, 9-13, 15-18	Rom 8:31-34	Mark 9:2-10
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent	Exod 20:1-17 <i>or</i> 20:1-3, 7-8, 12-17	1 Cor 1:22-25	John 2:13-25
4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent	2 Chr 36:14-16, 19-23	Eph 2:4-10	John 3:14-21
5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent	Jer 31:31-34	Heb 5:7-9	John 12:20-33

The official Introduction to the Lectionary (Second Edition, 1981) briefly explains the rationale for the reading choices for the Sundays of Lent:

The Gospel readings are arranged as follows:

- The first and second Sundays maintain the accounts of the Temptation and Transfiguration of the Lord, with readings, however, from all three Synoptics.
- On the next three Sundays, the Gospels about the Samaritan woman, the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus have been restored in Year A. Because these Gospels are of major importance in regard to Christian initiation, they may also be read in Year B and Year C, especially in places where there are catechumens.
- Other texts, however, are provided for Year B and Year C: for Year B, a text from John about Christ's coming glorification through his Cross and Resurrection, and for Year C, a text from Luke about conversion.
- On Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion the texts for the procession are selections from the Synoptic Gospels concerning the Lord's solemn entry into Jerusalem. For the Mass the reading is the account of the Lord's Passion.

The Old Testament readings are about the history of salvation, which is one of the themes proper to the catechesis of Lent. The series of texts for each Year presents the main elements of salvation history from its beginning until the promise of the New Covenant.

The readings from the Letters of the Apostles have been selected to fit the Gospel and the Old Testament readings and, to the extent possible, to provide a connection between

them.

(*Lectionary for Mass*, Introduction, chap. 5, par. 97)

### **Singing Lent**

Firstly, a few words of reflection and encouragement for those involved in the Ministry of Music:

“Yours is a share in the work of the Lord’s Spirit who draws us together into one, who makes harmony out of discord, who sings in our hearts the lyric of all that is holy. Yours is the joy of sounding the first note which brings the assembly to its feet, ready to praise God. Yours is to impart the ‘quality of joy and enthusiasm [that] cannot be gained in any other way’. Yours is a ministry that reaches the deepest recesses of the human heart; your work is soul stirring……. You help us to respond to God’s word, to acclaim the Gospel, to sing of our salvation in Christ. Yours is a ministry that gathers our many voices into one grand choir of praise”.<sup>1</sup>

One of the real joys of being involved in Music Ministry is the way in which we are drawn in to the different liturgical seasons through the music we select. In Lent we are invited to *hold back* a little, to be quieter and more reflective in our music and singing in order to encourage the congregation to focus on the themes of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Individual parishes and music groups will have found many different ways of doing this. One suggestion might be to open Mass by choosing a simpler gathering hymn or by chanting the entrance antiphon<sup>2</sup> instead of an opening hymn.

Specifically, in Lent, we fast from saying or singing the **Gloria** and the word, *Alleluia* – so keep a keen look out for it in the hymns you choose! And for those of you who like to clap, you’ll need to hold back from this too! The Lectionary provides four phrases to replace the Alleluia in the **Gospel Acclamation**:

Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!

Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus!

Glory and praise to you, O Christ!

Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God.

and the Liturgy Office suggest that you look for a setting you can sing as a whole parish at every Mass during Lent.

### **Opportunities**

If you don’t currently have music and singing at your **Ash Wednesday** Mass or Liturgy, and have the human resource to do so - there is some beautiful music written especially for this. Many parishes will have a **Lenten Penitential Service** and this can be a real opportunity to revise and develop your repertoire of suitable hymns at the same time as supporting the congregation as they gather themselves for the sacrament of reconciliation. As well as congregational hymns during the service, the choir might sing some suitable hymns quietly during reconciliations.

### **Resources**

---

<sup>1</sup> Austin Flemming, *Preparing for Liturgy: A Theology and Spirituality*, 1985, The Pastoral Press, Washington, D.C.

<sup>2</sup> For instance, John Ainslie’s *English Proper Chants, Benedicamus*, © 2004 are very simple and singable

*Music and Liturgy*, the journal of the Society of St Gregory is published 3 times a year and always contains a section on preparing the liturgy for every Sunday and feast day - with hymn suggestions from a variety of sources.

*Resurexit: Music for Lent, the Easter Triduum and Eastertide, 2001, 2008, Decani Music*

*Penitential / Reconciliation suggestions:*

**Jesus take me as I am**, Worship Songs and Choruses, Kevin Mayhew Ltd, ©2000, ISBN 1 84003 686 9

**Make me Holy**, ©2006 Aaron Thompson excl.UK adm.by CJM Music.com

**Father I have sinned**, Rejoice 'n Sing Vol 2, ©2001 CJM Music Ltd

**O God you search me**, Laudate, ©1999, 2007, Decani Music

**Hymn for year of mercy**, Paul Inwood ©2015, Pontificio Consiglio per la Promozione della Nuova Evangelizzazione

**Turn my heart, O Lord**, in A Martyr Haugen Songbook, Decani Music ©2009 ISBN 978-1-900314-183

**Water of new life**, in Paul Inwood, Ritual Moments, ©2005 GIA Publications, Inc.

## MUSIC IN LENT

Get your musicians involved!

There are many opportunities for your parish and community musicians in the coming months. All Diocesan musicians are invited to join the Diocesan Choir and cathedral musicians for three celebrations this spring: *The Diocesan Marriage Mass, The Diocesan Rite of Election, The Chrism Mass* (please note that a rehearsal before the day is involved for this celebration)

All these celebrations are in the cathedral, and details are on the Music Service website at [Cliftonms.com](http://Cliftonms.com). Please encourage your musicians to take advantage of these – they are great opportunities to meet other musicians and share ideas and information, as well as probably learn new music and ways of singing that music.

As well as the Diocesan Choirs the Music Service offers various training and development for Diocesan musicians and parishes. These include the Be a Better Singer day and a Singing the Office day. The Be a Better Singer Day, run by Martin Le Poidevin, is aimed at everyone who sings in a church: cantors, choir members, leaders and congregation singers. The Singing the Office day introduces, explains, encourages and facilitates the singing of Morning and Evening Prayer in parishes and communities. Please contact [martin@cliftonms.com](mailto:martin@cliftonms.com) if you are interested in hosting either of these events.

## LENT WITH FAMILIES AND YOUNG PEOPLE

### **Lent in the family**

The three pillars of Lent are prayer, fasting and almsgiving. How can we, in our family life, observe these practices in a new way? We usually think of fasting as giving up something like chocolate or biscuits – but there is much more to it than that! As a family, perhaps we could support each other in thinking about Lent as being a time of fasting and feasting - not in food, but in our attitudes. For example, we could be fasting from anger but feasting on patience, fasting from selfishness and feasting on compassion, or fasting from laziness and feasting on enthusiasm...the list could go on and on. We could, perhaps, fast from Facebook and feast on prayer – maybe by taking each of the Sunday gospels and reflecting on them together, talking about them and then praying that we hear what God is saying to each of us in the Word. And, if we don't usually pray before meals, then Lent would be a good time to start, even if it just on the Sundays. If we are fasting from our devices, we could feast, instead, on talking to one another and building up those means of communication face to face. Our giving, too, could be of our time – visiting someone who is sick or lonely, helping at a Food Bank or taking someone shopping if they find it difficult – as well as of our finances.

### **Young people**

During Lent we can focus on fasting, giving, and praying to help us prepare for the joy of Easter. Here are three suggestions for each that can help us live out our mission as young Catholics in the world.

#### **Fast:**

Spend 30 minutes per day during Lent away from your phone, tablet or TV.

Use the time to be inspired by something new - be creative; read Mark's Gospel and pray.

Try to resist take-aways or fast food. Donate the money to charity or use it to buy fresh food to cook as a family or group of friends.

Think about how we consume what is around us and take time to thank God for our world.

Consider, maybe, becoming plastic free for Lent.

#### **Give:**

Give of yourself and do something remarkable for others. Hold the door open for others, say good morning to people who greet you at school or college.

Talk to someone new.

Consider taking part in a mission action like the 'Give it up' campaign with CAFOD.

#### **Pray:**

Respond to the issues and stories you see on the news and social media with prayer.

Follow Pope Francis @pontifex and pray with him for the world.

Consider going to Mass during the week as well as the weekend. It can be a very different experience! Spend some time in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament during the week.

### **Resources**

Here are some useful links with some prayers and more ideas:

<https://www.loyolapress.com/our-catholic-faith/liturgical-year/lent/online-prayers-and-retreats/family-prayer>

[http://www2.ceosale.catholic.edu.au/uploadedFiles/07\\_News\\_Centre/News\\_Items/Family%20Prayer%20in%20the%20Time%20of%20Lent.pdf](http://www2.ceosale.catholic.edu.au/uploadedFiles/07_News_Centre/News_Items/Family%20Prayer%20in%20the%20Time%20of%20Lent.pdf)

<http://www.pbgrace.com/lent-ideas/>

We are here to support individuals, parishes and communities in everything that enables them to be more fully a Church of deepened prayer - so if there's anything that might support you and your parish in its celebration of the liturgy, please do get in touch.

Don't forget **Art & Architecture**

The Liturgy Office is also responsible for advising the bishop and our parishes on matters of liturgical Art and Architecture – building, re-ordering, alterations and additions and artistic commissions - for the churches of the diocese. The Department seeks to serve and help parishes and other communities to explore how they can make better use of their church buildings and chapels for the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy.

Any proposed changes which affect the liturgical and devotional life of the parish or community will need to be referred to the Liturgy Office for advice and permission where necessary. This may also require diocesan approval and possibly approval from the Historic Churches Committee (in the case of a listed building). For further information please see the Liturgical Diary, pages 157-158, or contact us at the Liturgy Office by email to [liturgy@cliftondiocese.com](mailto:liturgy@cliftondiocese.com) or by telephoning 0117 902 5595.