

Spring 2019

Welcome to this our second Spring Liturgy Office newsletter.

For our Spring newsletter this year we are looking at the Liturgy of the Word in Lent, the music of the Triduum and then an exploration of Mystagogia, the period after baptism when we continue to be formed in our faith – and this can be a life-long process.

Just as a reminder, Lent begins on Ash Wednesday (6 March this year) and ends just before the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday evening (17 April this year), when the liturgical season of the Easter Triduum begins. Ash Wednesday itself, like Good Friday, is a day of Fasting and Abstinence and opens our awareness to the needs of others for whom fasting and abstinence is an unavoidable way of life. For Fasting and Abstinence guidelines see [here](#).

Our Rite of Election will take place on the **Saturday after Ash Wednesday, 9 March**, at 11am and our **Mass for those who are newly baptised and newly received** into full communion with the Catholic Church will be at 10.30am **on 8 June** – both of these celebrations will be in our cathedral.

The **annual Chrism Mass** – when Bishop Declan will bless the Oil of the Sick and the Oil of Catechumens and consecrate the Oil of Chrism, all of which will be used throughout the diocese in the coming year - will take place in our cathedral on **Wednesday 17 April at 11am**. For a report and pictures of last year's celebration see [here](#).

Lent Penitential Services

As in previous years, Bishop Declan invites us to join him during this season of Lent to celebrate the abundant mercy of God through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Why not join him at one of the five venues across our diocese as part of your Lenten Pilgrimage? These liturgies will each begin at 7pm and will be held as follows:

Wednesday 13 March - St Bernadette, Whitchurch

Thursday 21 March - St Osmund, Salisbury

Thursday 28 March - St Gregory, Cheltenham

Thursday 4 April - Holy Family, Swindon

Thursday 11 April - St George, Taunton

The Liturgy of the Word for the Sundays in Lent

The Liturgy of the Word for the Sundays of Lent has a particular flavour for the particular liturgical years. Each of the three years seeks to offer us something different and something focused for our liturgical diet. God's word feeds us in our fasting, focuses us in our prayer, and challenges us in our charity. Those first two Sundays have the constancy of the narrative of the temptation of Jesus and the Transfiguration.

On Sunday Three, Four and Five Matthew's Year (A) accompanies us to the font and journeys with us towards initiation and a renewal of that baptismal commitment – the woman at the well, the healing of the blind man, the raising of Lazarus. Mark's Year (B) focuses, through the first readings, upon God's covenant – the Law of Sinai, a people's infidelity to God's

covenant leading to exile, a covenant renewed and written on hearts not tablets of stone. Luke's Year (C) picks up one of the themes that weaves its way through the gospel as a whole – God's mercy and compassion, his justice and forgiveness.

I wonder whether, if we were editors of the Lectionary, we would immediately select what's offered to us for the Third Sunday of Lent: it's Jesus hearing the news of the fate of unfortunate Galileans and the parable of the 'prudent' and patient gardener. There is a firm call to repentance – turn away from your sinfulness or the fate of those we hear of in the gospel will become ours, too. The parable of the un-producing fig tree allows us to understand something of the God who waits and gives us every opportunity to grow, to change, to flourish, to return, to yield and to produce fruit... fruit that is produced from the tenderness and the care that is shown us. Perishing seems to be an option for those who do not take up the opportunity but 'the tender of the vineyard' would rather wait... just in case.

The familiar parable of the Prodigal Son on the Fourth Sunday allows us to see something of ourselves, maybe, in the character of the wayward son who squanders the Father's gifts and makes that apologetic journey of return. We're given a glimpse of ourselves in the older son, sometimes resentful of the return of our foolish 'brother', resentful of the 'faithfulness' we have shown, jealous of the lavishness of the love that is poured out upon one we so quickly write off. But Luke wants us to gaze at the father of the two sons. He wants us to consider the seeming 'foolishness' of the compassion, the gentleness, the mercy, the forgiveness, the healing that is offered so readily. Luke wants us to understand God's merciful reaching out towards *us* – forgetful of our squandering and forgetful of our resentful heart - so that we might shape and fashion our own merciful outreach towards others. Luke shifts the spotlight away from the sons to allow us to grow in our understanding of the watchfulness of the Father who takes those steps to come to find us and come to meet us with immediacy of love, mercy and compassion.

Our Fifth Sunday in Year C puts before us the woman caught in adultery (told by St John). There is doodling in the sand, the 'finger of God' writing compassion in the dust of the earth rather than a 'writing off'. Whilst there are hands pointing, jabbing in condemnation, hands grasping at stones ready for the signal to throw, Jesus reaches out his hand to 'raise her up' and to restore her to life. She's not destroyed by her sin (notice that the crowd identify her by her sin) but she's offered that new beginning because of a divine tenderness, care and concern.

Palm Sunday of this Liturgical Year draws those compassionate and forgiving and merciful threads together in the narrative of the Passion. We hear of Jesus' concern for the women of Jerusalem and for the thief dying at his side. Even in the midst of dying Jesus offers God's word of peace, mercy and forgiveness. What does Luke challenge us to be? What does he ask of us in this Year of Prayer? Maybe it's those words of Jesus that draw Luke's story of the Good Samaritan to a close that we should take with us: 'Go and do the same yourself'. May God's compassion, justice, mercy, fidelity, tenderness and love be experienced by us this Lent so that we might be better at being those 'things' for others.

The Triduum in Music

For many musicians - whether singers, players, leaders or hymn-choosers - the Triduum and the Easter season is one of the most anticipated parts of the year. The Liturgy of the Triduum

and the Masses we celebrate are rich in their liturgy and tradition, and much of the music for them is beautiful. We have a responsibility to make sure that we do justice to all these elements.

There isn't the room here to give an exhaustive list of possible music choices (although you might find a few bits of inspiration [here](#), but here are a few general thoughts.

Preparation is the key. Look back at last year. What worked well? What didn't? Have you come across any new pieces since last year which would work well with your congregation and community? Have you sourced them? A tried and tested formula is to keep some of the music the same as last year, and to change some of it, and to return to some which you sang in previous years, but which has been "taking a rest". Generally, the best plan is to keep more the same than you change, although circumstances may dictate otherwise.

There are some moments in the various liturgies which merit music. Often, they're the moments which differ from the week-on-week Mass liturgies - the Washing of the Feet on Maundy Thursday, for instance; the Adoration of the Cross on Good Friday; the Litany of Saints at the Easter Vigil or the Sequence on Easter Morning. Although most of these parts of the liturgies have text printed in the Missal, most of the rubrics suggest that "other appropriate chants" could be used.

Although the Triduum liturgies are rich with meaning and extra rites, there's no need to fill every potential musical slot with music. That said, if you are singing various parts of the liturgy, why not use music which you reserve solely for this time of year? For instance, you could have a Glory to God which you only use on Maundy Thursday, or a special Holy Holy for the Easter Vigil or Easter Morning Masses.

Whatever music you choose, and no matter who plays or sings it, the Triduum is likely to take up more musical energy than almost any other time of year (okay, Christmas aside!). For that reason it pays to start rehearsing early, and it might be that we have that opportunity during Lent. As this is a time when we should limit the amount and complexity of music in Sunday Masses, the time saved could be used to practise the music for the Triduum.

Good luck choosing, rehearsing and singing the music for the Triduum this year!

Mystagogy – Entering into the Mystery

The word 'sacrament' comes from the Greek root for the word 'mystery'. When we begin Mass, the priest usually says, '*Let us... prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries*'. It is an invitation to enter deeply into the mysterious love of God. We experience the divine mystery most fully in the Eucharist when we share in the intimate act of eating and drinking together with those named after the one we love most: Christ.

Entering into this mystery for the first time often occurs when a person decides that they might wish to become a Christian. Within the Catholic Church, a process called the *Rite of Initiation of Adults (RCIA)* provides people with the opportunity to find out more about God and the Church; the final stage of this process is called Mystagogy. People enter 'Mystagogy' once they have been baptised. Mystagogy itself is a word that the vast majority of people, even

within the Church, have never heard of and would struggle to define. It is pronounced 'mis-tuh-goh-jee' and the root of it is 'agogy', which comes from the Greek 'agogos', meaning 'leader'. So 'pedagogy', for example, is about leading (or teaching) children. A synagogue is a gathering place (syn -'together') to which people are led. In other words, 'mystagogy' is a process of leading (or training) people into the mystery, the initiation into that which is not yet fully revealed. More specifically, mystagogy is an initiation into God's self-revelation. God is always in our lives, ever present, but sometimes, in order to see this fully, we have actively to give time to remembering how God has been acting in our lives.

In theory Mystagogy is the period of time from Easter to Pentecost when new Catholics are accompanied as they discover what it means to participate fully in the sacramental mysteries of the Church. These newly baptised are called 'neophytes' - from the Greek word meaning 'new plant' - because the faith has been newly planted in them. Even though their catechetical formation has been completed, they will still have much to learn about what it means to live as Catholic Christians. At this stage the 'neophyte' may have even more questions about living a life of faith. Just like a baby plant, they need the ongoing support of the community so that they can grow deep roots.

However, it would be wrong of any of us to think that 'mystagogia' is only for those who are new to the Church. In reality, 'mystagogy' is a life long journey for all of us as we enter ever more deeply into the mystery of God. The journey of faith does not end until the day we die. We enter into the mystery of God so that we may grow more deeply in our relationship with Jesus. It is in and through our participation in the sacraments that this is possible. The more deeply we come to know the Lord, the more able we will be to proclaim the joy of the Gospel, written in our hearts and lived out in our lives.

Pope Paul VI – a note for your Liturgical Diary

Pope Francis has added Pope Paul VI to the liturgical calendar as an optional memorial on 29 May. For details of the Mass, readings and Divine Office for the day see [here](#)

Liturgy Course update

Our Liturgy Course, created to help our diocesan community deepen its understanding of both liturgy and prayer, began on 30 January with over 50 participants. In the first session, Bishop Declan led us in Evening Prayer and spoke to us on the need for liturgical formation and why this course is so important, emphasising how, in the liturgy, we always encounter Christ. Gavin D'Costa, Professor in Catholic Theology at Bristol University gave us a wonderful insight into Rublev's icon *The Hospitality of Abraham* (otherwise known as *The Trinity*). Please remember the participants and speakers in your prayers throughout the year.

Sacristans and M.C's



There is a change to our planned 'Sacristans and Servers' Day in that it will now be for Sacristans and Masters of Ceremonies – both new and 'well-seasoned'. Led by Paul Moynihan on 30 March, the venue will be The Church of the Immaculate Conception, Stroud. Paul is Master of Ceremonies for Cardinal Vincent Nichols at Westminster Cathedral. Paul is also Secretary of the Diocese of Southwark's Liturgy Commission, a member of the National Liturgy Office's Liturgy Committee and Westminster Cathedral's Master of Ceremonies. There is plenty of parking and the day (which is free of charge) will begin with Mass at 10am and will end at 3pm. Participants are asked to bring

a packed lunch. For further information please contact Doreen Wyatt on 0117 902 5595. Registration is through adult.education@cliftondiocese.com

Music Day for Cantors

A day, primarily aimed at our cantors and 'would be' cantors, but which may also be of interest to choir members and other musicians, will be held on 22 June at Holy Family Church in Patchway, Bristol. We will be looking at music's place in the liturgy and at the ministry and role of the cantor in particular.

Facebook Page

The Liturgy Office now has a Facebook page – but we need some followers. Please have a look at it [here](#) and 'like' the page (if you do, of course!), then keep an eye on what's happening.

Do keep abreast of what else is happening by looking at this section of the website on a regular basis. The Liturgy Office has prepared a number of resources which we hope will enable us to celebrate the seasons fully. These include information about Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Lent itself, the Easter Triduum, Eastertide – and a whole host more.

And finally - 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 or by telephoning 0117 902 5595.